VOLUME ONE

معارف مصلح الأمت

The Statements and Lectures of Muslihul Ummat

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyulāh Sāhib

رحمہ اللہ تعالیٰ

Compiled and Annotated by:
Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī

Translated by:
Maulānā Mahomed Mahomedy

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād and Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat Allāhābād have had the honour of publishing several important books on the themes of reformation, Sufism, academic and religious works, and various biographies. Even at present, a few books covering different topics are either being composed or written. Some books have passed the stages of writing and are on the verge of being printed. May Allāh *taʿālā* give us the honour of conveying these works to your hands as quickly as possible.

From among these books is the first volume of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* which we have the honour of presenting to you. This book essentially contains the mysteries and wisdoms of the Sharīʿat, and pearls and gems related to the Dīn as presented by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* in his assemblies. It is a valuable treasure house of the sciences, mysteries and fine points of the Qur'ān and Hadīth. These have been simplified and explained by my honourable father after immense toiling. In this way, he made them equally beneficial for the novice and the expert. May Allāh *taʿālā* – through His grace and kindness – enable my father to complete this important work.

It also pleases me to inform the reader that volume four of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* with many new additions has gone for printing. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to continue presenting our written works to you. Āmīn.

May Allāh *taʿālā* reward all the members of Idārah Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat who fulfilled their obligations with much hard work and dedication. Finally, we are

indebted to Maulānā ʿAbd as-Sattār Sāhib Āchūdī through whose financial support ease was experienced in printing this book.

Muhammad ʿAbdullāh Qāmar az-Zamān Qāsimī Allāhābādī
Maktabah Dār al-Maʿārif Allāhābād
8 Rajab al-Murajjab 1434 A.H.
19 May 2013

PRELUDE

Maulānā Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī

الحمد لله وكفى وسلام على عباده الذين اصطفى

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, all the writings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* have been published and printed several times. These have been met with approval by not only the ʿulamā' and Sufis, but by the Muslim masses as well. May Allāh *taʿālā* proliferate and perfect the benefit of these works. Āmīn.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, the thought came to my heart that if the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* which are periodically published in *Maʿrifat Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*, are collated and published, then – by the will of Allāh *taʿālā* – they will most certainly benefit the religious and creedal lives of the scholars and the laity. When I mentioned this to my honourable father, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *dāmat barakātuhum*, he expressed his approval. He then emphasised on Muftī Zayn al-Islam Sāhib and myself to separate the statements from the published periodicals so that the themes can be selected easily.

We undertook this task by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*. Subsequently, my honourable father felt that if the statements are explained and simplified, and then published, the benefit will be much more. My father toiled hard to this end, went through the statements several times, and added his explanations wherever he felt the need. They were then noted, went through the publishing and printing processes, and – all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* – a collection titled *Maʿārif Muslihul*

Ummat is presented to you. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the Lord of the universe.

My honourable father most certainly had the right to undertake this task because Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* said to him on several occasions: "Look at my subject matter as though you are looking at the subject matter of someone else. You must then make changes and additions wherever you feel necessary. This is because there is difference in style between the spoken word and the written word."

In fact, he said to him on one occasion: "Listen! No theme of mine must be printed without being checked by you. Be very particular about not printing something which could cause objections later on."

I consider it appropriate to quote a text of the honourable Dr. Hāfiz Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib Siddīqī *rahimahullāh*, a khalīfah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, which he wrote in his evaluation of *Aqwāl-e-Salaf* volume two. He writes:

We praise Allāh *taʿālā* and send salutations to His noble Messenger.

> Before I can write anything about this book, I will relate one of my personal incidents. On one occasion, I made a request to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat ʿĀrif Billāh Shāh Wasīyyullāh *quddisa sirruhu* by saying: "I would like my two daughters to become *ʿālimahs*. How should I go about getting them educated?" Hadrat responded spontaneously: "Qamar az-Zamān will teach them. And once they mature, he will teach them from behind a veil."
>
> In addition to this, whenever I asked him for a ruling, Hadrat would explain each

> point himself. But when he used to get up to leave for his house, he would say to me: “Doctor Sāhib! You must also pose this question to Qamar az-Zamān.” My heart and mind were immediately filled with respect for his excellent good deeds, knowledge and conviction. A poet says:
>
> “This good fortune is not due to my personal strength. It can only be achieved through the generosity, grace and favour of the affectionate Allāh.”

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was a special student of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and he had given my honourable father permission to relate all his Hadīth narrations. Based on this, after the demise of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, the Daurah Hadīth commenced at Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm, Allāhābād. My honourable father taught *Bukhārī Sharīf*, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh* taught *Muslim Sharīf* and Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib *rahimahullāh* taught *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. The completion of *Bukhārī Sharīf* was graced by Maulānā Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib and Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Sāhib Ajmerī *rahimahullāh*.

It is solely through Allāh’s grace that my honourable maternal grandfather – Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – made a duʿā’ for deep understanding of Dīn for my father, and gave him a prayer mat and an ink-pot in his dream.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

If the reader ponders over this, it will become clear to him that this dream was realized in the sense that the

themes of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are continually being published in the written word through my honourable father. Furthermore, the sciences and knowledge of Hadrat *rahimahullāh* are being conveyed throughout the world through his lectures.

I heard my honourable father saying that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I am saying these words in this room but Allāh *taʿālā* has the power to convey them to the entire world." Thus, we see his statements being conveyed throughout the world through the lectures, speeches and writings of my honourable father.

Finally, I make duʿā' that Allāh *taʿālā* blesses my honourable father with good health and a long life so that he may continue propagating the teachings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Partābgarhī *rahimahullāh* through which we may be tutored and given the inspiration to practice. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī
27 Muharram al-Harām 1434 A.H.
Madrasah ʿArabīyyah Bayt al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād.

INTRODUCTION

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Saʿīd ar-Rah̲mān S̲āh̲ib Aʿz̲amī Nadwī
Principal of Dār al-ʻUlūm Nadwatul ʻUlamā’, Lucknow

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله رب العالمين، والصلوة والسلام على سيد الأنبياء والمرسلين محمد وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين. أما بعد:

India has always enjoyed the pride of producing great scholars and people of righteousness and piety. Its land and skies witnessed immense scholarly and spiritual sultanates. In every era of history one will find true men of Allāh *taʿālā* who bore the responsibilities of rectification and reformation, and who became the means for the guidance of thousands of Allāh’s servants. There were countless people whose contact with a pure and wholesome life had been cut off and they were wandering aimlessly in the pitch darkness of deviation and misguidance. The true men of Allāh *taʿālā* apprised these deviated souls of the reality of life and enlightened their hearts with the light of īmān and conviction. The fact of the matter is that these pious personalities of Dīn were a major means for the preservation and continued existence of Islam in India. Large academic and reformational centres were established by virtue of their sincerity and devotion. The fruits of their efforts are to be seen in every corner of India where the light of Islam is shining, and Muslims are in such large numbers.

At present, we refer to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – a personality who was trained in the khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan. He was from among the most senior khulafā' of Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and from among his closest and most special deputies. He fulfilled the responsibility of representing his mentor in the true sense of the word. His reformational efforts resulted in thousands of Allāh's servants being blessed with guidance, the ummat had the opportunity of being irrigated by his academic and spiritual blessings, and sincerity and piety became widespread.

A major portion of Shāh Sāhib's life was spent silently in rectificational works. Initially, he settled down in his ancestral hometown of Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā, district A'zamgarh, from where he lit the lamp of rectitude and guidance, showed the light to the deviated travellers and quenched the thirst of those seeking Allāh-recognition. He then settled down for some time in Gorukhpūr, and finally in Allāhābād. Through his efforts, a large khānqāh and madrasah were established. Together with this, he constructed a jāmi' masjid which served as a link between the khānqāh and the madrasah, and a training ground for every student who benefited from him.

However, on account of his ill-health, the recommendations of his doctors and the persistence of the people of Mumbai, he went and settled down in Mumbai for a change in the air and environment. Despite his short stay in a crowded and buzzing city like Mumbai, thousands of Muslims gained the correct understanding of Dīn from Shāh Sāhib. They learnt the lesson of living their lives in line with the Qur'ān and Sunnat. A large number of Muslims who had for

many generations been wandering in the darkness of polytheism and innovations pledged allegiance to him. They developed within themselves the desire to embrace the true Islam and to practise on it. In this way, a powerful change took place in a large and populous city like Mumbai, and associates and disciples of Shāh Sāhib were to be seen everywhere.

The trust of the external and internal knowledge which Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* received from Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* was fulfilled by him with immense trustworthiness, and his entire life and every moment of his life were spent in fulfilling this trust. Consequently, people from near and distant places would come in droves to this true man of Allāh *taʿālā*, fill themselves [with īmān] and depart. There were very few people who were deprived of the rays of this sun of rectitude and guidance, and were not supported by divine inspiration.

Shāh Sāhib's fundamental mode of training was the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. No assembly was devoid of these teachings. He had a peculiar style for creating an urge to follow the Sunnat and to adopt the lifestyle of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He was always mindful and observant of the lives of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*, the mujtahid Imāms and the 'ulamā' of Islam. Not a single moment of his life was spent in conflict with their lives. The focus of his efforts was that every disciple must become a true manifestation of the true Islamic way of life, he must practise totally on the Qur'ān and Sunnat, and the pure life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* must be before him all the time.

This is why he used to take people to task on the "smallest" of transgressions and never tolerated any action no matter how "small" it was if it entailed the

slightest opposition to the Sunnat. Sometimes he would take a disciple to task for several days, weeks and months; and would not pardon him until he was convinced that the disciple would not make such a mistake again.

This firm approach resulted in the majority of those who were affiliated to him living correct Islamic lives. As for those who remained close to him and had more opportunities of benefiting from him, they are righteous and pious both externally and internally. They are very religious and practising Muslims. The best way of gauging the rank of a mentor is to observe his close disciples and associates. The condition of the close disciples of Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is undoubtedly excellent and worthy of emulation.

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* refuted the incorrect belief of disregarding the importance of carrying out obligatory duties for the acquisition of proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* while giving more importance to optional acts. Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* paid special attention to according full importance to the obligatory duties and stressed that they were superior to the optional acts. Likewise, he emphasised teaching the recitation of the Qur'ān. He used to say: "One must read the Qur'ān. Understanding is not essential for reading the Qur'ān. If a person reads it without understanding, he can still acquire proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and His pleasure. It strengthens īmān, creates the urge for action, and develops a spirit of sincerity and piety."

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was not only a reformer and Sufi shaykh. Rather, he was a powerful scholar of Islam who possessed intricate knowledge of the mysteries and finer points of the Qur'ān and Sunnat. He has many academic works which testify to his scholarly acumen. His academic themes and

assemblies will always show the light to those treading the path. His never-ending blessings will continually prompt the Muslims of India to adopt an Islamic way of life. He is a living example of the following words of Allāh *taʿālā*:

اَلَا اِنَّ اَوْلِيَاءَ اللّٰهِ لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُوْنَ

Listen! The friends of Allāh shall have nothing to fear nor will they grieve.

Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is not with us today but his great contributions and the fruits of his reformational efforts are present. We can make our lives Islamic and strengthen our īmān in the light of the principles laid down by him. This is how we can fulfil his rights and bring joy to his soul.

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ، اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

O the self which has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you.[1]

As per the wishes and efforts of the people of Mumbai, Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* made an intention to perform hajj in 1967. It was decided that he would board the first ship to the Hijāz because he intended spending Ramadān in the Holy Lands. A caravan of Shāh Sāhib's disciples, associates and relatives was with him. His ship departed from the shores of Mumbai on 22 November 1967. Three days later, he departed from this ephemeral world on the 25th of November. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

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[1] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-28.

How grief-stricken his disciples and associates who were with him on this journey must have been by this sudden tragedy! Only those who were with him can correctly gauge it. No sooner this tragic news reached India, it caused intense grief to the Muslims of this country. Shāh Sāhib's disciples and associates in Mumbai, Allāhābād, Gorukhpūr, Aʿzamgarh and other places were all grief-stricken. Nonetheless, no one complained against the decree of Allāh *taʿālā*. Their tongues uttered words of pain and sorrow while their hearts were immersed in grief. This tragedy appears to be a major calamity, and passing away while on a journey seems to be very painful. However, Allāh's wisdom and His special treatment of His accepted servants are beyond our understanding. It is not for everyone to understand and fathom the divine wisdom behind this tragedy.

It is most pleasing and satisfying to note that Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī – a special confidant of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib and his senior deputy – has started to collate the statements of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and that the first volume of this collection is now ready, and being published under the title *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat*. We are convinced that the same manner of education and training, and the Sharīʿat and Tarīqat will be learnt from these statements as were learnt from Shāh Sāhib's assemblies. Furthermore, the vast regions of this country where his blessings and teachings had proliferated will now be conveyed to the elite and the laity through this collection. A treasure-house of rectitude and guidance containing Allāh's pleasure and obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will now be made available to them. And it will prove to be a means for providing ease and conveying blessings in ones daily practices.

I congratulate H̱aḏrat Maulānā Muẖammad Qamar az-Zamān S̱āẖib Allāhābādī from the bottom of my heart on his collation and publishing of *Maʿārif Mus̱liẖul Ummat.*

Inspiration is solely from Allāh *taʿālā*.

Saʿīd ar-Raẖmān al-Aʿẕamī Nadwī
Nadwatul ‘Ulamā’, Lucknow
11/5/1434 A.H.
24/3/2013

FOREWORD

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

This insignificant servant says to the reader that he has made a firm resolution to publish in book form the reformational, rectificational and academic statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* which are being published in parts in the periodicals *Maʿrifat Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. The first volume is now in your hands. Allāh willing, it will be a source of much enlightenment. I make a solemn prayer that by reading it, Allāh *taʿālā* creates such a yearning in the reader’s heart that it prompts him towards action. May it develop a determination to acquire Allāh’s love, His recognition and His proximity especially in the hearts of those who are associated with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Āmīn.

Firstly, I would like to present a brief history of the periodicals *Maʿrifat Haqq* and *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. Allāh willing reading it will bring joy to you.

I got married in 1370 A.H./1950 to the daughter of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and proceeded to live with her at his house in Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā, district Ma’u. On my arrival, my special friend Master Muhammad ʿĪsā Sāhib Hamīdpūrī and the honourable Maulānā Bashīr ad-Dīn Sāhib Kaupāganjī (a student of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Anwar Sāhib Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*) were present in the service of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. These two personalities were considered to be his special

associates and were fulfilling the task of penning Hadrat's statements. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards.

The arrival of Maulānā •Abd ar-Rahmān Jāmī

During the same period, Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh* arrived to live permanently in Hadrat's service. He too commenced the task of noting and penning Hadrat's statements and began attending our lessons.

During this period, Hadrat completed writing two of his books, *al-Usūl an-Nādirah* and *Tahdhīr al-ʿUlamā'*. Special attention was given to reading the book *Tahdhīr al-ʿUlamā'* to the senior ʿulamā' of Kaupāganj and Ma'u. The ʿulamā' were highly impressed by this book and requested Hadrat to have it published. Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was especially emphatic in expressing the need to publish and print this book. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* granted his permission. The Maulānā then directed his efforts in this regard and the book came into the hands of the students. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards.

Soon thereafter, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Quddūs Sāhib Rūmī *rahimahullāh* initiated the periodical *al-Ihsān* from Allāhābād in Muharram 1374 A.H./1954. In it, he used to publish the statements of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and the teachings and writings of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. However, this series ended after some time.

Subsequently, the ʿulamā' expressed their desire to restart the publishing of this periodical but Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was not happy about it. When Hāfiz Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib Siddīqī *rahimahullāh* eventually presented his request, Hadrat agreed happily and also

wrote a comprehensive paragraph for it. It is quoted below:

> We praise Allāh *taʿālā* and send salutations to His noble Messenger.
>
> A monthly periodical is to be published by Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib and others. My statements and writings will probably be published in it. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to enable them to carry out this task, to bless them with good intentions, and to accept this work. This is my duʿā'.
>
> Wasīyyullāh, *may Allāh pardon him.*

The periodical began to be published monthly under the editorship and administration of the Dr. Sāhib and it was well received by all sections of the community.

By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Sāhib Jāmī *rahimahullāh* had been penning the statements from the very beginning. When the periodical began to be published, the Maulānā paid even more attention to noting Hadrat's assemblies and the statements which he made on other occasions. He would then read them to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. Similarly, this insignificant servant and Maulwī ʿAmmār Ahmad Sāhib used to note the statements of the assemblies through a tape recorder, arrange them in sequence and present them to Hadrat *rahimahullāh*. He would then study them carefully and they would be published in *Maʿrifat Haqq*.

Hadrat's love for his seniors

Although the periodical began its publication, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* used to say: "The periodical should contain more themes of our seniors than my own themes. This is because they were sincere and the

special servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. Their statements and writings will prove to be more beneficial.”

When a person reads the early issues, he will note that many articles of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and others were published.

Unfortunately, certain unfavourable situations caused *Maʿrifat Haqq* to terminate and it was replaced by *Wasīyyatul ʿIrfān*. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, the articles of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* are continually published in it, and they are most beneficial. Maulānā Mahbūb Ahmad Nadwī – a grandson of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – felt that if the statements are published in book form, they will – Allāh willing – prove to be most useful to all sections of the community. Allāh willing, this series – titled *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* - will continue in several volumes.

The greatness of the statements of the seniors

All people of the heart and scholars agree that the statements of the auliyā’ of Allāh *taʿālā* have a special effect which is perceived by every man of the heart. At times, the person who hears their statements does not even understand them, yet he is affected by them and enjoys them.

I heard this several times from Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* that Arab ʿulamā’ used to attend the *Mathnawī* of Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* lessons which were conducted by Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, and they used to enjoy them thoroughly. Someone asked Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*: “Hadrat! These Arab ʿulamā’ attend the *Mathnawī* lessons. How do they understand the Persian and Urdu explanations?” He replied: “They understand them fully through their temperament

and emotions.” There are other examples of this nature.

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* was also from among those personalities who made a deep impression on the hearts and through whose company and effective statements the ummat was revived.

In his introduction to *Risālah al-Mustarshidīn*, ʿAllāmah ʿAbd al-Fattāh̲ Abū Ghuddah *rah̲imahullāh* writes on the effects and benefits of reading and listening to the statements and life conditions of the righteous and pious servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. He writes in this regard:

> The hearts are naturally disposed to loving to emulate the righteous, to adhere to their ways, to be inclined to be like them, and to follow their actions and statements. You will therefore see that in my commentary [to this book], I included the statements and incidents of the ʿulamā’, the righteous, the ardent worshippers, the mujāhidīn, the ascetics and the patient ones. These statements and incidents would urge a believer, together with his īmān, to emulate them, to imitate their lifestyles, to do the deeds which they did, to increase the strength and energy of his Islam, his striving, his patience and his bravery, and to be the best sample for the righteous who preceded him. A poet says
>
> وتَشبَّهوا إن لم تكن مِثلَهم – إنَّ التشبُّه بالكرام فلاحُ
>
> *Imitate [them] if you are not like them. Surely, imitating the honourable [would result in your] success.*

Three reasons for wanting to live in this world

The righteous scholars are of the opinion that being in the company of the righteous, hearing about their life conditions and studying their lives and characteristics are important objectives of this life. This is because an intelligent person loves this world only for the perfection of these qualities and attributes, increase in good deeds and preparations for the Hereafter. This is why Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said that had it not been for three things, I would not want to live in this world:

1. To go personally for the sake of jihād in Allāh's cause or to despatch an army for this purpose.
2. To spend the night in worship for the immense rewards that can be accrued through it.
3. To be in the company of such people who select and choose pure and excellent conversations just as the choicest dates are selected [from a heap].

Note: Glory to Allāh! What excellent words which ought to be adopted in our lives. It is especially necessary for the associates of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and Muslims in general to listen to and read the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, make them a part and parcel of their lives, and strive to practise on them. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

The establishment of Idārah Ma•ārif Muslihul Ummat and Dār at-Tazkiyah wa al-Ihsān

It is to this end we established Dār Saʿīd on 12 Rabīʿ al-Awwal 1425 A.H./2004. From here, the work of *Maʿārif Muslihul Ummat* is being done and other books

are also being worked on. *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat* will be published from this centre. Work from Dār at-Tazkiyah wa al-Ih̲sān is also continuing. Since 1427 A.H., a khānqāh is conducted here in the first ten days of Ramad̲ān. Several hundred seekers especially from Gujarat attend this programme. A few seekers from overseas countries also attend. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, everyone perceives benefit in this. Anyway, all praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* that seekers and students come throughout the year. We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* that these people derive spiritual benefit and it becomes a means for them to acquire spiritual affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā*. This is certainly not difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*.

A few important points

I read every letter and word of these statements and articles several times; and made changes wherever I felt the need for clarification and simplification. Allāh willing, these changes will be in line with the temperament and approval of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*. While he was alive, he said to me on several occasions: "You must study every theme of mine carefully and then make changes wherever you feel appropriate so that there remains no point which is objectionable." May Allāh *taʿālā* accept this effort and make it a source of reward. Āmīn.

Muftī Zayn al-Islām Qāsimī, Maulwī Maqs̲ūd Ah̲mad Qāsimī, Maulwī Maqbūl Ah̲mad Qāsimī and Maulwī Mah̲būb Ah̲mad Nadwī helped in the printing of this book according to their personal capabilities. Maulwī Mis̲bāh̲ Ah̲mad referenced the Ah̲ādīth thereby bring more life to the themes.

Maulwī Muh̲ammad ʿAbdullāh Qāsimī, Maulwī Muh̲ammad ʿUbaydullāh Nadwī and Maulwī Fīrauz

ʿĀlam Qāsimī displayed much interest and enthusiasm in the composing, editing and printing of the book. This work was then completed through the financial assistance of Maulānā Qārī ʿAbd as-Sattār S̲āh̲ib Āchaudī. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards.

We started reading the articles and statements of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* which have already been published in *Maʿrifat H̲aqq* and which are to be published in the future volumes. Every statement is a testimony to H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat's distinguished position in the field of reformation and logical reasoning. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to study his teachings and guidelines, and to practise on them. Āmīn.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Qārī Muh̲ammad Mubīn S̲āh̲ib reads the articles and themes of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* in the assembly. People derive much benefit from them. This is another reason why I felt that the statements and themes which are published in parts in *Maʿrifat H̲aqq* be compiled in one place. In this way, it will become easier to read and listen to them. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to benefit from this golden series. Āmīn.

When I requested H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Saʿīd ar-Rah̲mān Nadwī Aʿz̲amī – Principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Nadwatul ʿUlamā' Lucknow – to write an introduction to this collection, he acceded happily to my request. He wrote an excellent and comprehensive introduction and sent it to me. It is included in this book. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

I request all to pray that Allāh *taʿālā* makes *Maʿārif Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat* beneficial to all sections of the community – the elite and the laity. May He accept it

and honour Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* with the highest stages in Jannatul Firdaus. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
Bayt al-Adhkār, Wasīyābād, Allāhābād
29 Muharram al-Harām 1434 A.H.
13 December 2012

A CONCISE INTRODUCTION TO H̲AD̲RAT MUS̲LIH̲UL UMMAT

Maulānā Sūfī Z̲ahīr ad-Dīn Ah̲mad

To: Maulwī Maq̲būl Ah̲mad, Maulwī Mah̲būb Ah̲mad, Maulwī Muh̲ammad ʿAbdullāh and Maulwī Muh̲ammad ʿUbaydullāh

As-salāmu ʿalaykum wa rah̲matullāhi wa barakātuh

I hope you are well. I am feeling weak and request your prayers for my complete good health.

I learnt via Muh̲ammad T̲āhir Khān that you people are publishing the statements and articles of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* which had been published in *Maʿrifat H̲aqq* and *Was̲īyyatul ʿIrfān*. I was overjoyed when I learnt of this because I consider it to be a great glad tiding in my favour. I pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to instil you with even more inspiration to publish and propagate the knowledge and sciences of your maternal grandfather [H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*] and to make it easy for us to live our lives accordingly. I pray that Allāh *taʿālā* blesses your honourable father with good health and strength, and that Islam spreads through him. Āmīn.

No sooner the discussion hovered around H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*, Madrasah Was̲īyyatul ʿUlūm and Khānqāh Was̲īyyullāhī, my heart demanded that I pen a few points about my education and training there. Writing about it will bring joy to me and serve as an advice and admonition. It is possible that other readers will also benefit from it.

In the presence of Hadrat Maulānā Wasīyyullāh Sāhib

Hadrat Maulānā Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Amīn Sāhib *rahimahullāh* were teachers at Dār al-ʿUlūm Ma'u Nāth Bhanjan, district Ma'u. I went there in 1954 and commenced my studies. I was completing my qirā'ah studies under Qārī Riyāsat ʿAlī Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He said to me: "I will take you to meet a pious personality; you will be most pleased at meeting him." I got ready and accompanied him to Allāhābād in 1960 to meet Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Wasīyyullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. After staying over for a few days, he said to me: "You must stay here." When I heard this, an intense urge developed in me to remain. I went to Dār al-ʿUlūm Ma'u Nāth Bhānjan, packed all my belongings, returned to Allāhābād and presented myself before Hadrat. He asked me to commence my studies here.

I had already studied up to the *Qudūrī* year at Dār al-ʿUlūm, so I was placed in a class which was in line with this year. Most of the books which I had to study were taught to me by Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib *mudda zilluhu*. In this way, I remained in the company of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and studied all the books which are taught up to the final year – *Bukhārī Sharīf, Muslim Sharīf*, etc. – under Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib Allāhābādī, Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib Machlī Shahrī and Hadrat Maulānā Muftī Hanīf Sāhib Jaunpūrī.

In the course of my studies, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to pay extra attention to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib in the sense that whenever there was any academic or spiritual discussion, he would call for him and relate

it to him. There was no night and day for him. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* would call for him at any time and he used to present himself. Hadrat would sometimes tell us in privacy: “After my departure from this world, Qamar az-Zamān will surpass everyone.” We noticed this in the course of our *Bukhārī Sharīf* lessons until the final lesson. Whenever he used to start a topic, he would convey it to completion and there would be more spirituality in it. We used to feel as though he was the appointed and special conveyor of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.

The life conditions of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib were most unique from the very beginning. What can I say about his piety and Allāh-consciousness! Through the blessings of Hadrat’s company, points related to Allāh-recognition used to form and emanate from his mind all the time.

When we used to sit in his class, he used to say things which only the Ahlullāh are worthy of. He was fully aware of every branch of the Sharī‘at and Tarīqat. Whatever he said used to be presented in the light of the Sharī‘at. He used to demonstrate the difference in levels between the Sharī‘at, Tarīqat and Ma‘rifat. He would explain every theme in a most clear manner. He used to spend several days in explaining certain Ahādīth and clarify their internal and external meanings. We had a special affinity with the words of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib which would then affect our hearts.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* passed away on 22 Sha‘bān 1387 A.H./25 November 1967 while on his journey for hajj. This had a major effect on the heart and mind of Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib in

the course of our *Bukhārī Sharīf* lessons. Consequently, he used to teach in a such a manner that we felt as if Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was present in the lesson. Firstly, there was the sorrow over the demise of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, then the special manner in which Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib taught, and then the feeling that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was present in the lesson. These three factors combined in a manner which caused me to go into an ecstasy in the course of the lessons. I used to read the Arabic text in the class. I heard the explanation of the first Hadīth of *Bukhārī Sharīf* – actions are judged by intentions – by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. I then heard a further explanation of it from Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib. Both these had an immense effect on my heart, and I recall them to this day.

He said in the course of the lesson: The heart is the repository for intention. When the heart is pure of all evils, the intention will be just as pure. If there is filth in the heart, i.e. if the intention is not pure, actions will be likewise filthy. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made intention the centre of actions. We hear people saying: "As the intention is, so will be the blessing."

The excellent manner in which *Bukhārī Sharīf* was completed was due to the perfect Allāh-recognition of Hadrat Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib. Later on, whenever I used to read any Hadīth, its meaning and message used to become clear to me from Allāh *taʿālā*. This was the effect of the full attention and blessing of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was a qutb of his time. A Maulānā from Kaupāganj related an incident to us. There was a majdhūb who lived in an

orchard. Someone asked him: "Can you tell us who is presently the qutb?" He laughed and replied: "You go to him continually and still you do not know!?" The Maulānā said: "Is it that one from Allāhābād?" The majdhūb replied: "Yes, yes – he is the one." They asked him: "Who is the qutb in Pakistan?" He replied: "The same one is the qutb of both places." They said: "But Pakistan is a country on its own." The majdhūb said: "You can continue thinking that these are two countries, but Allāh *ta'ālā* considers them to be one."

Such was the rank of our Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. It is solely through Allāh's grace that we are affiliated to him. This is the bounty of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Many 'ulamā' of India and Pakistan had reverted to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. In fact, even his own teacher, Hadrat 'Allāmah Muhammad Ibrāhīm Sāhib Balyāwī *rahimahullāh* – the head teacher at Dār al-'Ulūm Deoband – had reverted to him and received khilāfat from him.

In the assembly of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat

Every conversation of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to be in line with the Sharī'at and Sunnat. If not, he would remain silent. We personally noticed on some occasions when the entire assembly was in absolute silence. The gist of his talks used to be sincerity and good character. He used to stress clarity in dealings. He used to say: "The fundamental excellence of a person lies in the clarity and transparency of his dealings." He used to emphasize the following Hadīth most often:

المسلم من سلم المسلمون من لسانه ويده

A true Muslim is one from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe.

When any seeker used to come to Hadrat, he would assess his capabilities and then undertake his rectification accordingly. This is an essential quality for a spiritual guide. His excellence lies in training his disciples according to their capabilities.

In the company of Maulānā Qamar az-Zamān

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib is our shaykh and honourable teacher. I remained in his company from 1960 to 1968. I continued my studies under him during this period. Whenever he used to utter any wise words, I used to note them down in my notebook. There was no big or small assembly in which he did not teach us something from the Qur'ān and Hadīth. I had a natural affinity with him, and this is most essential for a student or disciple. In most cases when he used to speak on a certain topic, it was as if we had requested him to speak on it. In other words, he used to convey the thoughts which were running though our hearts and minds.

Daurah-e-Hadīth

Hadrat used to conduct the *Mishkāt Sharīf* lessons after the 'ishā salāh in the house of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. The honourable Jāweyd 'Abd ash-Shakūr Sāhib who was a special associate of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to attend this class as well. Hakīm Kalīmullāh Sāhib – a close relative of Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* – had accompanied him; so he too used to attend this class. Both these personalities were most impressed by Hadrat's lessons and would speak

highly about them. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

When Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* was departing for hajj in 1387 A.H./1967, he gave Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib permission to narrate all his narrations. He also instructed him saying: "You must teach *Bukhārī Sharīf*. After all, this is why I taught it to you." Unfortunately, that hajj journey turned out to be his journey to the Hereafter. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib began teaching *Bukhārī Sharīf*. Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī Sāhib taught *Muslim Sharīf* and Maulānā Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib taught *Tirmidhī Sharīf*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them with the best of rewards. Āmīn.

At the time, my Daurah-e-Hadīth classmates were Maulwī Irshād Ahmad, Maulwī Anwār Ahmad, Maulwī Muhammad Arshad Benārsī and others. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless them with good health and wellness. Āmīn.

The concluding lesson of *Bukhārī Sharīf*

Maulānā Sayyid Zahūr al-Hasan Sāhib, the superintendent at Thānah Bhawan and khalīfah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, and Maulānā Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Sāhib Ajmerī, a khalīfah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* were invited for the occasion. These personalities arrived and much preparation was put into the assembly for the conclusion of *Bukhārī Sharīf*. We had the great honour of attending. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

We completed Daurah-e-Hadīth in 1388 A.H./1968 and were honoured as qualifying students. Soon thereafter I was offered jobs in ʿAlīgarh, Orissa and Bastī. I expressed my thoughts to Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib, Maulānā Jāmī Sāhib and Maulānā Hanīf Sāhib and said to them that I am prepared to go wherever they advise me. They all concurred to send me to ʿAlīgarh.

Previously, Hakīm Ifhāmullāh Sāhib came to Allāhābād and suggested that he would take me to ʿAlīgarh. He used to come every Sunday to Allāhābād in order to treat Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* and I used to assist him. He used to say to me: “I am going to take you to ʿAlīgarh.”

In this way, the advice of my honourable teachers and the Hakīm Sāhib’s thoughts concurred. Then came the issue of my certificate and on what basis I will get employment at ʿAlīgarh University. Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib gave me a qualification certificate from Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm, Allāhābād with his own signature on it. When it was presented to Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Taqī Amīnī, the head of religious studies at ʿAlīgarh University, he said: “There can be no better certificate than the one issued from the madrasah of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*.”

Subsequently, I was appointed as a religious education teacher at the City High School at ʿAlīgarh on 13 January 1969. Thirteen years later I was appointed to the Sayf ad-Dīn Tāhir High School. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, I taught for 31 years and retired. I was so punctual that people used to set their watches with my time of arrival and departure. This was solely through the affection, love and prayers of my honourable teacher. People generally change their

way of dressing after coming to ʿAlīgarh. Instead of looking like Muslims, they look like Englishmen. Countless thanks to Allāh *taʿālā* that I never changed my dressing. I continued wearing a kurtah. If there was anything which I did add, it was a sherwānī (a long coat worn over a kurtah). I did not even change the style of my topī. All this is solely by the grace of Allāh *taʿālā* and the prayers and special attention of my teachers.

My good fortune

I had developed a friendly relationship with the honourable Hakīm Kalīmullāh Sāhib in the course of our *Mishkāt Sharīf* lessons. Consequently, when the issue of proposing to the daughter of Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* came up, Hakīm Ifhāmullāh Sāhib sent me to Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haqq Sāhib Hardoʾī *rahimahullāh* and the marriage bond was realized. All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Journey to Lucknow

Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* suffered from a stroke in 1965. It was decided to appoint Hakīm Khwājah Shams ad-Dīn Sāhib to treat him. Maulwī ʿAmmār Ahmad Sāhib, Maulwī ʿAbd al-ʿAlīm ʿĪsā Sāhib and myself were appointed to tend to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. We accompanied him and had the good fortune of tending to him and seeing to his needs. I clearly recall some of the things which he said. For example: "The attendant who assists me to perform wudū' and salāh in the beginning of the salāh time is my greatest benefactor." He said on one occasion: "This world is Sunnat while the Hereafter is fard."

Hadrat *rahimahullāh* then proceeded to Mumbai while we left for Allāhābād.

Z̲ahīr ad-Dīn Ah̲mad
Imām and khaṯīb of Masjid Anwār, Sir Sayyid Nagar
Kīlā Nagar, Dūdhpūr, ʿAlīgarh, U.P.

A CONCISE BIOGRAPHY OF HADRAT MUSLIHUL UMMAT

Shaykhān - ʿAynān Tajriyān is written by the grandson of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*, Maulwī Mahbūb Ahmad Qamar az-Zamān Nadwī. It is included here as an introduction to the life of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

Family and birth

He was born in 1312 A.H./1895 in Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā, district Mau. His respected father's name was Muhammad Yaʿqūb Khān who was a hāfiz of the Qur'ān and a respectable man in the community. His mother was not only a very pious woman but an icon of religiosity and sound character.

Consequently, he was most conscious about piety and purity from a young age. He was regular with tahajjud salāh, accustomed to dhikr and contemplation, and enjoyed doing these actions. As a result, people spoke about his piety and considered him to be a born walī.

Education

His initial education commenced in the maktab of his village. And the honour of memorizing the Qur'ān was under the tutelage of Hāfiz Walī Muhammad Sāhib (who was a pious man in line with his name. Walī means a close friend of Allāh *taʿālā*). On seeing the capabilities of his righteous student, his teacher was convinced that this child will rise on the horizon of knowledge and religion as a sun whose light will illuminate large numbers of people. It was because of these feelings and emotions that Hāfiz Walī Muhammad Sāhib advised him saying: "Look, my son! You must go and study Arabic."

Journey to Kānpūr and Deoband

With this in mind, Hadrat proceeded to Kānpūr with Maulānā Muhammad ʻUthmān Sāhib Fatahpūrī, and commenced his early studies in Persian and Arabic.

In order to complete his higher studies, he proceeded to the most famous religious institute of India, Dār al-ʻUlūm Deoband in 1328 A.H. He completed the Daurah Hadīth (the final year of the ʻālim course) in 1336 A.H. and studied *Bukhārī Sharīf* under the distinguished Hadīth scholar, Hadrat Maulānā Anwar Shāh Kashmīrī *rahimahullāh*. There were other senior ʻulamā' who, together with being men of great knowledge, were immersed in piety, devotion and love for Allāh *taʻālā*.

For example, Maulānā Sayyid Asghar Husayn Sāhib Deobandī, Hadrat Maulānā Muftī ʻAzīz ar-Rahmān Sāhib ʻUthmānī, Hadrat Maulānā Shabbīr Ahmad Sāhib ʻUthmānī, Hadrat Maulānā ʻAbd as-Samīʻ Sāhib, Hadrat ʻAllāmah Maulānā Ibrāhīm Balyāwī and others. May Allāh *taʻālā* shower His mercy on all of them.

He was extremely cautious in the course of his studies. He would not attend general invitations to meals. He was most respectful of his teachers and remained aloof from the company of students in general.

Early spiritual training and stay in Thānah Bhawan

Hadrat was fully concerned about rectification of character and purification of the self from the very beginning. The ember of yearning and love for Allāh *taʻālā* was firmly embedded in his heart. Thus, during his student days he established a bond of spiritual reformation with Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind Maulānā

Mahmūd al-Hasan Sāhib Deobandī *rahimahullāh.* He attended his assemblies and satiated his spiritual yearning in this way. However, Hadrat Shaykh al-Hind *rahimahullāh* was apprehended because of his involvement in the movement for the freedom of India [from the British] and imprisoned on the island of Malta. He therefore established a spiritual relationship with Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh,* pledged bayʿat to him, and began frequenting the khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan.

After completing his studies, he focussed on rectification and reformation, and handed himself over to Khānqāh Imdādīyyah Thānah Bhawan.

He had presented himself before Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat *rahimahullāh* with a genuine quest and was therefore rewarded with total attention from his erudite mentor. He traversed the stations of sulūk and levels of the path in a short time and was conferred with the garment of khilāfat. This is the bounty of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

In the course of his stay, he taught in the madrasah of the khānqāh. He would also be an occasional imām in the masjid. In addition to this, he used to record the statements (*malfūzāt*) of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat, transcribe his writings and translate books.

Despite all these academic services, he always remained focussed on his essential and fundamental task of dhikr, spiritual practices, purification of the self and rectification of character. In fact, he would very often walk out of the khānqāh towards the fields and occupy himself in dhikr and contemplation for lengthy periods of time. After all, tasawwuf is essentially a restlessness. If there are no waves of restlessness in man’s ocean of life, his life is totally

devoid of recognition, ecstasy and spiritual intoxication. He used to read this poem very regularly:

> My heart is not attached to the orchard and it recoils from the desert. Now where can we take this mad man to?

Stay in Fatahpūr Tāl Narjā

Once he was filled with conviction and recognition, he settled down in his hometown by the instruction of his mentor. After the departure of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Muhammad Amīn Sāhib Nasīrābādī *rahimahullāh*, the region was thirsty for a practising ʿālim and man of spiritual affiliation through whose excellence, devotion and efforts the dry branches of this land are revived and the orchard of Dīn and the Sunnat becomes green and lush.

Allāh *taʿālā* selected Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for this purpose. On one hand he was most concerned about rectification of the ummat, and on the other side, this deserted land was awaiting him eagerly. Consequently, major changes were noticed in the people by virtue of his rectificational efforts and continuous lectures and talks. Those who were caught up in baseless customs were reformed considerably and an Islamic sentiment and temperament came into their lives. Hadrat's blessings in the field of education and training increased by the day, and his status as a reformer became loftier. As a result, seekers and the spiritually thirsty began coming to him from distant places. They benefited from his teachings and returned after having realized their objective.

The old and new khānqāh

When the number of seekers began increasing, the need for a permanent place was felt. It was probably

in 1946 that a rustic building comprising of four rooms was constructed on a piece of land which was to the west of the masjid. When this too was not enough, a double-storey solid structure was built. Through the blessings of the dhikr and Qur'ān recitation of the seekers, the khānqāh became fully inhabited. This resulted in a unique spiritual atmosphere which caused the heart of every newcomer to be affected and impressed.

At the same time, Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* initiated Madrasah Wasīyyatul 'Ulūm in which my eldest uncle, Qārī Muhammad Mubīn Sāhib, my honourable father, and Maulānā Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib were students. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* himself taught 7-8 books which included *Bukhārī Sharīf, Muslim Sharīf* and *Mathnawī Sharīf*.

Expansion of the masjid

When the present masjid became too small to accommodate the number of worshippers, a need was felt to extend it. The old masjid was demolished and the foundation of a new masjid was laid. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* personally oversaw its construction. This masjid is still well-known for its beauty and simplicity. Soon thereafter, the foundation for a large madrasah was laid next to the khānqāh. Plans for its construction were made but this was not realized.

Emigration to Gorukhpūr

An election took place in the village and this resulted in certain differences and disharmony. Hadrat was saddened, left his hometown and proceeded to Gorukhpūr. He stayed over at the house of Maulānā

Nathārullāh Sāhib and Maulānā Amjadullāh Sāhib. He then brought his family over.

Here too, seekers of the truth began arriving in droves and Hadrat's assemblies continued to be conducted. The hearts and minds of those who attended were filled with Hadrat's perfume of knowledge, wisdom, and recognition and love of Allāh *taʿālā*. The confidence and love which the local residents had in Hadrat increased by the day. His work in the fields of rectification and teaching also progressed.

Unfortunately, here too Hadrat had to encounter unpleasant situations which caused him to leave. He proceeded to the house of Hakīm Wasīy Ahmad Khān Sāhib who lived in the same area. As was his norm, Hadrat became occupied in propagating Dīn and purification of the self. He laid the foundation of Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, this madrasah is running to this day.

Unfortunately, during Hadrat's stay in the house of Hakīm Sāhib, he suffered from gripes and added to it, hiccups which refused to stop no matter what medication he took. It was decided he should go to Allāhābād for treatment. Arrangements were immediately made and Hadrat departed with a few close associates. He stayed over in Hasan Manzil and some days later, his family was also brought over in the beginning of November 1957 (1377 A.H.). Hadrat then lived in the houses of his very special associates, Hājī Shafīʿullāh Sāhib and Hājī ʿAbd al-Wahīd Sāhib.

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat's blessings began to pour forth and he initiated his academic and rectificational assemblies once again. People benefited tremendously. Seekers would listen to Hadrat's talks with full enthusiasm and these would stir in them the desire to practise on Dīn. However, the place was very

small plus the intense heat and shortage of water inconvenienced everyone.

House number 23 Bakhshī Bāzār

Hadrat felt it would be good if he could obtain a more spacious house. He mentioned this to his special confidant, Hāfiz Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib Siddīqī who in turn advised him to purchase the house of Abul Hasan Sāhib. The house appealed to Hadrat so he bought it in the name of his four daughters, Safīyyah, ʿAqīlah, Nabīlah and Shakīlah. The house was registered in their name on 9 July 1958. Hadrat then shifted from Hasan Manzil with his associates and family.

On settling down in his new house, Hadrat found an excellent opportunity to increase his work and to let it flourish and spread. Bearing in mind that Allāhābād is very centrally located, it became easy for people to come and go. The young and old, rich and poor, ʿulamā' and Sufis – everyone began coming in large numbers. Hadrat's work progressed tremendously in this way.

Masjid and madrasah

The Dhāl Wālī Masjid was lying incomplete since quite some time. Hadrat completed its construction and made extensions to it. He then laid the foundation for Madrasah Wasīyyatul ʿUlūm and gave permission to Dr. Salāh ad-Dīn Sāhib to initiate the periodical, *Maʿrifat Haqq*. Hadrat's work progressed even more in this way.

Teaching

Hadrat had an academic temperament. Consequently, in addition to his programme of spiritual rectification

and training, he used to fulfil the duties of teaching with full enthusiasm. He used to personally teach the elementary and final year books. He taught *Bukhārī Sharīf* and other books to Maulānā Muhammad Hanīf Sāhib and others. And then he taught *Bukhārī Sharīf* and *Tirmidhī Sharīf* to my father, my eldest uncle, Qārī Mubīn Sāhib, and others. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat conferred permission to my father to relate Hadīth. In line with this permission, when Hadrat passed away, my father taught *Bukhārī Sharīf* for one year. This is the favour of Allāh *taʿālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

Journey to Fatahpūr

Once everything was well-established, the people of Hadrat's hometown requested him to visit. Hadrat accepted and departed on 19 Shawwāl 1380 A.H. The local residents were overjoyed, and everyone – Muslim and non-Muslim, relatives and close family – treated him with absolute respect and honour. Hāfiz Munshī Muhammad ʿAbbās Sāhib and his son, Shams al-Hudā obtained permission from Hadrat to host all the guests for two weeks. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward them. By the grace of Allāh *taʿālā*, Hadrat was able to do a lot of Dīnī work during this period.

After staying over for a few months, Hadrat left in Muharram 1381 A.H. for Allāhābād and reinitiated his work with full force. In addition to this, he used to go every month to Ma'u Nāth Bhanjan where he used to deliver a lecture at the Katrah Masjid. The ʿulamā' and general public from the surrounding areas used to attend.

Journey to •Alīgarh

Upon the sincere invitation of Hakīm Ifhāmullāh Sāhib, Hadrat journeyed to ʿAlīgarh on 18 Shawwāl

1382 A.H. with a large group of his associates. He stayed in the house of the Hakīm Sāhib for seven days who excelled in fulfilling the rights of hospitality. Hadrat was most happy with him and made a lot of du'ā' for him. In the course of his stay, Hadrat conducted many assemblies in which he explained most beneficial themes. These have been published in *Ma'rifat Haqq* under the title, *Majālis 'Alīgarh*.

Many seniors and influential people of the city, and the educated class of the university were immensely impressed by Hadrat's personality and his rectificational and educational lectures. They benefited from him, many of them established a spiritual bond with him, and they began visiting him frequently.

Journey to Mumbai

Hadrat's first journey to Mumbai was before his journey to 'Alīgarh on 8 October 1963. Subsequently, he undertook several journeys to Mumbai. The people of the city were most impressed by Hadrat. His going to Mumbai was no less than a rain-laden cloud. Many people benefited from him. Although they were immersed in the busy hustle and bustle of Mumbai, they used to attend Hadrat's assemblies in Kurlā.

Other journeys

Hadrat undertook propagational and rectificational journeys to other places as well, e.g. Jaunpūr, Kaupāganj and Lucknow. The people of these areas were most impressed by him. Hadrat had an intense desire to convey Dīn to the entire world. He used to say: "How far can I travel on my own. You people must learn the work from me and serve Dīn in the whole world, and spread the Sunnat."

Towards the end he used to experience a strange and unique restlessness and worry about how the work could continue. His appointed time eventually arrived and he went to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

Hajj journey or journey to the Hereafter

My grandfather - Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* - had performed hajj in 1936. However, in 1967 certain causes and reasons made him to intend to go for hajj with his daughters, and their husbands and children. He informed my father [Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Sāhib] to come to Mumbai with Maqbūl Ahmad and others. My father took us and proceeded to Mumbai. My grandfather had been saddened over his separation from us [he was in Mumbai while we were in Allāhābād]. However, it was necessary for my father to remain in Allāhābād to maintain the house, the madrasah, the khānqāh and to conduct the assemblies. This is why my grandfather had asked us to remain in Allāhābād. He had even told us: "Later on I will take you all for hajj."

We remained in the blessed company of our grandfather for two weeks. He was overjoyed to have us, but he certainly experienced certain inconveniences which he used to mention to my father. There were also certain private matters which he discussed with him.

My grandfather departed on 19 Shaʿbān 1387 A.H./22 November 1967. We also accompanied him to the harbour. When he boarded the ship and went into his compartment, we noticed that he was considerably saddened over our separation. He had advised my father with reference to us: "You must take special

care of the children." We eventually got off the ship with much grief and stood on the shore.

My grandfather suddenly appeared from his compartment, sat on a chair and raised his hands for du'ā'. Everyone was overcome by emotion and they continued saying "Āmīn" to his du'ā'. I hope that my grandfather's du'ā's are accepted in Allāh's court.

The ship departed and we stood watching it for quite some time. It eventually disappeared from our sight and we returned dejected to Kurlā, where we were staying. We then left on the Bombay Mail on the 24th of November. We reached Allāhābād at 9pm the next day. A large number of people came to receive us at the station. They all appeared sad but we did not know why. As we reached our house, we learnt that my grandfather had passed away and that he was conveyed from this ephemeral world to the everlasting world of the Hereafter.

As per a Hadīth, my grandfather will receive the reward for hajj every year until the day of Resurrection. This in itself is a tremendous reward. This is the bounty of Allāh *ta'ālā* which He confers on whomever He wills.

We could not stand on our feet when we heard this tragic news and began thinking of ourselves as helpless. My brother, Maulwī Sa'īd Ahmad Sāhib, could not contain himself. He only recovered after many days. The fact of the matter was that the tragedy was too much to bear. Nevertheless, Allāh *ta'ālā* – through His grace – steered us and those who were with my grandfather.

A detailed account of this tragedy is quoted from *Purāne Chirāgh* of Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Abul Hasan 'Alī Nadwī *rahimahullāh*:

Maulānā departed by ship on Wednesday 22 November 1967. Just two days passed when on the 24th of November after the *maghrib s̲alāh* he experienced a few bouts of unconsciousness and passed away that same night. Instead of visiting the Baytullāh (House of Allāh), he met Rabb al-Bayt (the Lord of the House). Surely to your Lord is your eventual return.

When this news reached the H̲ijāz via wireless, Maulānā's associates there, and Mad-h̲at Kāmil S̲āh̲ib himself, the Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, tried to obtain permission to get H̲ad̲rat buried in Jannatul Muʿallā. These efforts were successful and, contrary to the norm, official permission was granted to bring the blessed body to al-Balad al-Amīn (Makkah Mukarramah). The grave was prepared at the spot where Shaykh al-Mashā'ikh H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib Muhājir Makkī was buried, and ghusl (bathing the deceased) arrangements were initiated at Madrasah S̲aulatiyah.

Even here, Allāh's *taʿālā* special will was displayed. Due to some misunderstanding with regard to the permission, Maulānā was hastily bathed, shrouded and janāzah s̲alāh performed, and his blessed body was lowered into the sea, as per the ship's rules. I have heard that Maulānā was reading this couplet repeatedly before his departure from Mumbai:

> Where will you ever place flowers over my grave when you will not even be able to throw soil over it!?

The manner in which this entire story unfolded clearly displays the helplessness of planning and the overwhelming power of divine destiny. This is not the place for details.

وَاللّٰهُ غَالِبٌ عَلٰى أَمْرِهِ وَلٰكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ

Allāh prevails over His affairs but most people do not know.[1]

In this way, Maulānā was included in the list of those holy and luminary personalities who, instead of having the honour of being buried in the ground, were handed over into the lap of the ocean. Such personalities include righteous and accepted people like (1) Hadrat Maulānā Muftī ʿInāyat Ahmad Sāhib Kākaurwī *rahimahullāh* – the author of *ʿIlm as-Sīghah* and *Tārīkh Habīb Ilāh*, and (2) Qādī Muhammad Sulaymān Sāhib Mansūrpūrī – the author of *Rahmatul lil ʿālamīn*. One more spiritual master has now been added and the ocean cannot complain about being totally deprived of the honour which is enjoyed by the ground.[2]

(This is the end of the quotation from *Shaykhān - ʿAynān Tajriyān*. I now quote the sermon from *Kitāb al-Adhkār* of Imām Nawawī *rahimahullāh* and then commence with the actual book. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 21.

[2] *Purāne Chirāgh*, vol. 1.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله والواحد القهار، العزيز الغفار، مقدر الأقدار، مصرف الأمور، مكور الليل على النهار، تبصرة لأولي القلوب والأبصار، الذي أيقظ من خلقه من اصطفاه فأدخله في جملة الأخيار، ووفق من اجتباه من عبيده فجعله من المقربين الأبرار، وبصر من أحبه فزهدهم في هذه الدار، فاجتهدوا في مرضاته والتأهب لدار القرار، واجتناب ما يسخطه والحذر من عذاب النار، وأخذوا أنفسهم بالجد في طاعته وملازمة ذكره بالعشي والإبكار، وعند تغاير الأحوال وجميع آناء الليل والنهار، فاستنارت قلوبهم بلوامع الأنوار، أحمده أبلغ الحمد على جميع نعمه، وأسئله المزيد من فضله وكرمه، وأشهد أن لا إله إلا الله العظيم، الواحد الصمد العزيز الحكيم، وأشهد أن محمدا عبده ورسوله وصفيه وحبيبه وخليله، أفضل المخلوقين، وأكرم السابقين واللاحقين، صلوات الله وسلامه عليه وعلى سائر النبيين وعلى كل، وسائر الصالحين. (كتاب الأذكار للنووي).

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOOD INTENTION IN ALL ACTIONS

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* commenced his *Kitāb al-Adhkār* with the chapter: The order to have sincerity and good intentions in all external and internal actions. He then quotes the following verses under this chapter:

وَمَآ اُمِرُوا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ، حُنَفَاءَ

They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone] – turning away (from all false creeds).[1]

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلَا دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts which reaches Him.[2]

The explanation of the above verse of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is then quoted:

ولكن يناله النيات

Rather it is your intentions which reach Him.[3]

Hadrat ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* included "good intention" with sincerity in this chapter. We learn from this that sincerity is essentially good intention. In other words, when the Sharīʿat speaks of an intention, it is not referring to just a will to do something. It is the philosophers who consider the meaning of a will in

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[1] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

[2] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 37.

[3] *Al-Adhkār*, p. 6.

an intention. They say that the voluntary action of a sound and mature person comes after a will, and this will is known as a nīyyat or intention.

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that this is not what the Hadīth intends. Rather, it refers to the final objective of an action. Although it is realized right at the end, it is envisioned at the very beginning.

Take this desk as an example. The purpose and objective behind making it is so that books can be placed on it. This need first comes to the mind. Then the materials such as timber, nails, etc. are obtained (ʿillat-e-māddī), and the carpenter will then make it (ʿillat-e-fāʿilī). Its specific shape and form then comes before us (ʿillat-e-sūrī). After all this, books are placed on it (ʿillat-e-ghā'ī). Although this came at the end, it was envisioned at the very beginning.

In the same way, when man does an action such as salāh, his intention is to obtain reward in the Hereafter and Allāh's pleasure and proximity. This is the final objective of the action and this is what the Sharīʿat refers to as nīyyat and ikhlās. In short, what the philosophers refer to as nīyyat, the Sharīʿat refers to as ikhlās.

I feel I should quote verbatim the explanation of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* on the subject of ikhlās. I have not come across a clearer explanation. He writes:

الإخلاص هو أن يتمثل في عقله نفع العبادة لله تعالى من جهة قرب نفسه من الحق كما قال تبارك وتعالى: "إن رحمة الله قريب من المحسنين". أو من جهة تصديق ما وعد الله تعالى على السنة رسله من ثواب الآخرة فينشأ منه الأعمال بداعية عظيمة لا يشوبها رياء ولا

سمعة ولا موافقة عاده ويصحب هذا الحال على جميع أعماله حتى الأعمال المباحة العادية، قال الله تعالى: "ومآ أمروا إلا ليعبدوا الله مخلصين له الدين". وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات.[1]

Ikhlā<u>s</u> means that the benefit of worship for Allāh taʿālā be present in a person's mind. This benefit could be that because of it, the proximity to Allāh taʿālā which he acquires comes before him. As Allāh taʿālā Himself said: "Surely Allāh's mercy is near the doers of good." Alternatively, it could be because the person fully affirms the reward which Allāh taʿālā promised in the Hereafter via His Messengers. Consequently, the person carries out actions with intense devotion which is not tainted by ostentation, causing people to hear about it, nor in fulfilment of a custom. This condition then accompanies all his actions, even those which are merely permissible and habitual. Allāh taʿālā says: "They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone]." Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "All actions are dependent on intentions."

Shāh <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* is explaining the meaning of ikhlā<u>s</u> as: The benefit of worship must be present in a person's mind, viz. proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* is achieved through it. Thus, after he does an act of worship, he must feel that he is getting closer to Allāh *taʿālā*. Alternatively, he must perceive in his heart the benefit of worship by having full conviction in the promise of reward in the Hereafter as explained by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. When either of these two are found in a believer's heart – i.e. thinking about

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[1] حجة الله البالغة، ج ٢، ص ٩٢.

proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* or conviction in Allāh's promise – he will not do any action to show off, to make people hear of it, as a custom or merely out of habit. After all, proximity to Allāh *taʿālā* and hope for reward in the Hereafter are lofty objectives. Due to his sincerity, a believer will not leave them for low and mean matters. Instead, he will abhor ostentation and custom-following because these are created things while he has established a correct bond and connection with his Creator. From this explanation we learn that there is a world of difference between the Sharʿī nīyyat and what is explained by the philosophers.

It was very difficult for me to explain this issue to the people here. A person said to me: Today I have understood this difference that due to intermixing of rational and traditional sciences, many of the things which came from the philosophers have proliferated among us. This difference now becomes absolutely clear, e.g. the meaning of performing salāh according to the philosophers is that a person must make the intention that he is performing salāh – he is not eating, he is not talking, etc. Rather, he is performing salāh.

On the other hand, the Sharʿī meaning of performing salāh with nīyyat is for a person to think to himself that he is performing salāh for Allāh's pleasure, His proximity and for reward in the Hereafter. Now you too must have fully understood the difference between the two. A philosopher is still trying to get his beginning right while the believer has already reached the end. This is the meaning of the Hadīth: "Actions are gauged by intentions."

After quoting the previously mentioned Qur'ānic verses, ʿAllāmah Nawawī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* quotes the very same <u>H</u>adīth. The full text of which reads as follows:

عن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات وإنما لكل امرئ ما نوى، فمن كانت هجرته إلى الله ورسوله فهجرته إلى الله ورسوله، ومن كانت هجرته إلى دنيا يصيبها أو امرأة ينكحها فهجرته إلى ما هاجر إليه.[1]

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat ʿUmar ibn al-Kha<u>tt</u>āb ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Actions are based on intentions. Each person shall receive what he intended. The one who emigrates to Allāh and His Messenger (i.e. for them), his emigration will certainly be to Allāh and His Messenger. The one who emigrates to acquire of this world or to marry a certain woman, his emigration will be considered for whatever purpose he emigrated.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes with reference to the above <u>H</u>adīth:

هذا حديث صحيح متفق على صحته مجمع على عظم موقعه وجلالته، وهو أحد الأحاديث التي عليها مدار الإسلام، وكان السلف وتابعوهم من الخلف رحمهم الله تعالى يستحبون استفتاح المصنفات بهذا الحديث تنبيها للمطالع على حسن النية واهتمامه بذلك والإعتناء به.

This <u>H</u>adīth is unanimously classified as authentic. Everyone concurs on its greatness and importance. It is

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[1] كتاب الأذكار، ص ٦. صحيح البخاري، حديث رقم ١ و ٥٤.

one of the Ahādīth around which Islam revolves. The pious predecessors and the latter scholars who followed them liked to commence their written works with this Hadīth as a reminder to the reader on the need and importance of having a good intention.

He writes further on:

وبلغنا عن ابن عباس رضي الله عنه أنه قال إنما يحفظ الرجل على قدر نيته، وقال غيره إنما يعطى الناس على قدر نيّاتهم.[1]

We heard that Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: A person remembers in accordance with his intention (i.e. the better his intention the better he will store the information in his memory). Another scholar said: People are given (knowledge of Dīn) in accordance with the level of their intention.

I did not hear this statement of Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* anywhere but look at what a beautiful criterion he provided for the correctness of an intention! That is, a person's intention has an effect on the things which a person remembers. In other words, if his intention is correct, he understands the point and remembers it. If after entering a branch of knowledge a person's understanding does not open or he does not remember what he learnt, then it is an indication that his intention is not correct. Consequently, the other levels which are to follow will remain deficient.

> When a builder places the first brick crookedly, the entire wall will be crooked even if the wall reaches the highest stars.

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[1] كتاب الأذكار، ص ٦.

This is why I say that the assembly of a shaykh, a lesson or a lecture are the places from which a person can take and receive something. If he does not take any effect here, will he be able to take any effect at his house!? If a person is heedless in his shaykh's assembly, how can he be mindful when he is outside?

The importance of s̲idq

Understand the next point: The correctness of intention which we spoke about is given another name by the Sufis, i.e. s̲idq (truthfulness). Towards the end of his *Risālah Qushayrīyyah*, the author has a chapter titled "Advice for the murīds". In it he explains the essential requirements for murīds. He writes:

فأول قدم للمريد في هذه الطريقة ينبغي أن يكون على الصدق ليصح له البناء على أصل صحيح، فإن الشيوخ قالوا إنما حرموا الوصول لتضييعهم الأصول.[1]

It is necessary that a murīd's first step in this path be on s̲idq so that the construction can proceed on a sound foundation. The Sufis said: People are deprived of reaching Allāh taʿālā because they discard the principles.

Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to s̲idq:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْآ أَنَّ لَهُمْ قَدَمَ صِدْقٍ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ

Give glad tidings to the believers that they have a true footing with their Lord?[2]

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[1] قشيرية، ص ١٩٧.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 2.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʻānī* writes in his commentary to this verse:

أصل الصدق ما يكون في الأقوال ويستعمل كما قال الراغب في الأفعال، فيقال صدق في القتال إذا وفاه حقه، وكذا في ضده يقال كذب فيه فيعبر به عن كل فعل فاضل ظاهرا وباطنا، ويضاف إليه كمقعد صدق ومدخل صدق ومخرج صدق إلى غير ذلك.[1]

The word sidq is essentially used in words and speech. However, according to ar-Rāghib, it is used in actions as well. For example, it is said: "The person was true in his jihād" if he fulfilled the right of jihād correctly. Similarly, the opposite is also applied, e.g. it is said: "He proved to be a liar in his jihād." This word is applied to every virtuous action, whether external or internal. It is also used in an attributive sense. For example, a true place of sitting, a true entry, a true exit, and so on.

Sidq is a condition of the heart. Therefore, if a person's intention is genuine (true), his words, actions and conditions will be genuine. The ranks which the Ahlullāh reached was due to the genuineness of their intention. It was the practice of the pious predecessors to do something in order to acquire something. They were not like the people of today who attribute their excellences to themselves and blame the shaykh for their defects and shortcomings. People write to me and say:

> Of what benefit is a genuine shaykh to a person who is devoid of any treasure?

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[1] روح المعاني، ص ٦٢.

Do you know what they intend by this? What they really want to say is that if you are really a genuine shaykh, then convey us as well. If you cannot do this, we will conclude that you are not a genuine shaykh.

Do you see how sharp these people are! They want to place the blame on others. They do not consider a sound footing, truthfulness, sincerity and good intention to be of any value. Whereas we just quoted the statement of Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* when he said that a person is able to remember and recall knowledge according to the level of his intention. It cannot happen that a person possesses the quality of sidq and is still deprived. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنَّ اللّٰهَ لاَ يُضِيْعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely Allāh does not waste the reward of the righteous.[1]

أَنِّيْ لَا أُضِيْعُ عَمَلَ عَامِلٍ مِّنْكُمْ مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثٰى

I do not lay to waste the labour of any labourer from among you, be he man or woman.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* is most kind and generous. It can never be imagined that a labourer will not be paid for his labour.

An incident related to sidq comes to mind. I have a friend who himself said to me: Hadrat *rahimahullāh* wrote the following and sent it to me:

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 120.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 195.

> I offered my service and servitude, but I could not purchase your bad habit.

He then handed me over to Khwājah S̲āh̲ib. He said: "I wrote to H̲ad̲rat on one occasion and informed him that my love for him has settled deeply in my heart. I feel restless and I start to cry when I think of him. H̲ad̲rat wrote in reply: "S̲idq makes an impact and it did the same to me. I permit you to maintain a bond and to continue corresponding."

Did you see! He either removed him from his company or wrote to him giving him permission to correspond. He also said to his honourable wife at home: "This is my friend. He must get a share of whatever comes to our house." He himself used to say: "Allāh *taʿālā* was extremely kind to me. H̲ad̲rat became happy with me, and my Dīnī and worldly life was set in order. I am now living happily. H̲ad̲rat's honourable wife feeds my children, and when anything comes to the house, I receive a share of it. So much so, if a metre of fabric comes, she cuts off a share for me and sends it to me."

I related this incident to demonstrate the power of s̲idq and sincerity, and to show that no one's sincerity ever remains concealed. Shaykh Muh̲īyy ad-Dīn ibn ʿArabī writes:

> The scholars who concentrate on the external always hesitate in understanding the speech of the Sufis. The incident of Imām Ah̲mad ibn Shurayh̲ is enough for you. He attended the assembly of H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* one day. He was asked: "What did you understand from his speech?" He replied: "I did not understand anything which he said, but I experienced a certain power in my heart which pointed to internal action and spiritual sincerity.

His speech was not the speech of a person who is on falsehood.”[1]

Incidents of sincere people

When the Ahlullāh saw the high status of sincerity and good intention in the Qur’ān and Sunnat, they did their utmost to correct their intention. Their life conditions and incidents are testimony to this.

(1)

There is a pious personality by the name of Bishr H̠āfī. When he passed away, Allāh *taʿālā* said: “Welcome to Bishr.” It was said to him: “At the time when I gave you death, there was no better person than you on earth.”

Do you know why he received such a great glad tiding? It is because he used to remain barefoot. This is why he was given the name H̠āfī (barefooted person). I heard from H̠ad̠rat the reason for this. Bishr H̠āfī used to say: “The land is Allāh’s floor, it is disrespectful to wear shoes and walk on His floor.” This is why he remained barefooted throughout his life. I also read in one book that he was not wearing shoes at the time when he pledged bayʿat to his shaykh. He wanted to maintain this form and appearance for the rest of his life. He felt that if he were to wear shoes, he will be changing his appearance. As a result of this respect [for his shaykh], Allāh *taʿālā* ordered the animals to abstain from excreting in his path. After quite some time, someone saw excreta in his path. He concluded from this that Bishr H̠āfī has passed away. When he made inquiries, his conclusion proved to be correct.

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[1] *At-Tanbīh at̠-T̠arabī*, p. 35.

(2)

A group of Sufis was eating food. A person came in and offered salām but no one replied to his salām. They continued eating. When they finished their meal, they explained to him the reason for not replying to his salām. They did not say to him that the ruling in fiqh is that a person should not offer salām to people who are eating and that it is not wājib on those who are eating to reply to the salām. Instead, they said to him: “Brother! We are Sufis. When we do anything we do it for Allāh’s pleasure. We were eating with the intention of gaining His pleasure and His proximity. Based on this intention, our eating was also an act of worship; and it is prohibited to reply to a salām when you are engaged in worship. This is why we did not reply to your salām.”

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful answer which was in line with the Sufi way. These personalities certainly practised [on the Hadīth]: “Actions are based on intentions.” And they were indeed very particular about following the Sunnat.

(3)

A person opened the shutter of his house. A saint asked him: “Why did you open the shutter?” He replied: “So that light and air may enter the house.” The saint said: “My dear fellow! You should rather have made the intention: ‘So that the sound of the adhān enters the house.’ If you made such an intention, do you think the light and air would have stopped coming in?” Light and air will enter anyway. This is why I say that there is no Dīnī work in which Allāh *taʿālā* did not place any worldly benefit. However, if you make an intention for Dīn you will receive the reward for a good intention.

(4)

While in the assembly of Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Shāh Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*, a suggestion was made to construct a building and start a farm in a certain place. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* asked the people: “What should the intention be?” The people voiced their opinions. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* said: “This is the intention which I made: ‘O Allāh! Those who pass by this place must be able to get relief from the hot sun, rain and so on.’” Glory to Allāh! Look at the intention for continuous charity which Hadrat made! After all, the Hadīth refers to this as continuous charity: If a person plants a tree on the path so that travellers can get shade and comfort from it, it will be a source of continuous charity for him.[1]

When a duʿā’ was made at the end of the assembly, a person made this duʿā’: “O Allāh! Forgive all those who are buried in the graveyard of this orchard.” Incidentally, this same person was the first one to pass away and was buried in that very graveyard. May Allāh *taʿālā* forgive him.

These incidents which I am relating to you deal with sincerity and good intention. I had just said to you that sincerity is essential for everyone. The reason why I am saying this is that I am observing that nowadays even Dīnī knowledge is not being studied for Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, it is adulterated by other corrupt objectives. This is why people are deprived of its blessings. It is due to the corruption of intention that both our Dīnī centres have deteriorated: (1) The madāris no longer have teachers and students who are teaching and studying solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. (2)

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[1] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٣، ص ٢٤٨، حديث رقم ٣٤٤٩.

The seekers in the khānqāhs no longer possess sincerity and devotion. Knowledge is now sought merely to increase one's capabilities and to deliver lectures. In fact, it is done for even lower objectives.

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say that if a student studies to increase his capabilities, it is possible that he will come right; but he will not get the inspiration to practise on it. If another student studies for the sake of practising, then – Allāh willing – he will certainly be inspired to practise on it and it is also possible that his capabilities will come right. In other words, in the first case only capabilities will be realized, while in the second case both the inspiration to practise and realization of capabilities will be acquired. Look at the immense benefits in correcting one's intention! Despite this, people are unaware of this or do not want to do it. This is why they fall into loss.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Muhammad Anwar Sāhib [Kashmīrī] *rahimahullāh* used to say that people make du'ā' when they drink zam zam water because du'ā' is accepted on such an occasion. A person made this du'ā': "O Allāh! Let my memory become like the memory of Hāfiz Dhahabī *rahimahullāh*." (He was a high ranking Hadīth expert and had memorized many Ahādīth). Another person made this du'ā': "O Allāh! Inspire me to follow the Sunnat." Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say that the second du'ā' is more important than the first one because if a person is not inspired to do good actions, what will he do with a strong memory!?

Now listen to another incident. I was going to Thānah Bhawan when a person decided to join me on the journey. Some how or the other he came to know that I am going for hajj. He attended to my needs

throughout the journey. If it was the time of salāh and I was about to get down for water, he would immediately take the jug from my hand and bring water for me. He continued in this way for the entire journey. He got off with me in Sahāranpūr. When he was seeing me off, he said: "You are going to Makkah and Madīnah. When you go there, you must make du'ā' that I am able to deliver speeches and lectures." He didn't say anything about a strong memory or about the ability to follow the Sunnat. All he said was that he must be able to speak clearly. I was quite disappointed but could not refuse because he was my benefactor. I remembered his request and made du'ā' for him. I do not know whether my du'ā' was accepted or not, but not long thereafter I heard that he passed away. Now look! He did not have the time to learn how to deliver talks and also passed away.

Intention is of fundamental importance. If the intention is correct, then even a little action is accepted by Allāh *ta'ālā*. If the intention is not right, everything else is wasted.

While explaining the Hadīth: "Actions are judged by intentions…" the 'ulamā' say that a person emigrated from Makkah Mukarramah to Madīnah Munawwarah to get married to a certain woman. All the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* were emigrating in compliance with Allāh's order and for His pleasure. But this person was emigrating solely to get married to a woman by the name of Umm Qays. Later on, he was referred to as Muhājir Umm Qays (the one who emigrated for Umm Qays). The worldly torment for having an incorrect intention was that while some Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* were referred to as Muhājir Ilallāh and others as Muhājir Ilar Rasūl, this person was referred to as Muhājir Umm Qays. He

must have regretted this his entire life that due to a wrong intention, he was tainted with this title and his story became an eternal lesson and admonition for the entire Muslim nation.

When this Hadīth is read before us, it ought to fill us with fear and prompt us to rectify our intentions. On the contrary, we notice that even our students do not have the correct intention for studying. They strive very hard in their student days but their intention is not correct. And so, the same effects are visible. On completing their studies, these students become 'ulamā' and leaders. They then convey the same effects to others. What I just said can be easily confirmed and corroborated from the present day practice of having jalsahs (gatherings). Lectures are delivered throughout the night, but everyone is absent for the fajr salāh.

A person in Gorukhpūr used to say to me: "The masses will never have confidence in an 'ālim who is absent for the fajr salāh." I said: "You have given the correct reason for the peoples' lack of confidence in such an 'ālim. If they see an 'ālim defective in his actions, they will never be able to have confidence in him."

This defect is not from today but from the very beginning of their student days. They did not study for Allāh's pleasure, so now it is very difficult to do anything with sincerity. In today's times we observe a student opposing his own teacher. I am castigating a person who remains in the company of another and still opposes him! This is a most despicable situation. Whereas students are of a higher rank than one's children. After all, it is they who receive knowledge from their teacher and become the means for the proliferation of his spiritual excellences. On the other

hand, it is only one's genealogy which continues from one's children. Despite this, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* sought refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from children who are causes of evil.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَعُوْذُ بِكَ مِنْ وَّلَدٍ يَّكُوْنُ عَلَيَّ وَبَالًا

I seek refuge in You from children who are a cause of evil to me.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked for a righteous child:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ مِنْ صَالِحِ مَا تُؤْتِي النَّاسَ مِنَ الْمَالِ وَالْاَهْلِ وَالْوَلَدِ غَيْرَ ضَآلٍّ وَّلَا مُضِلٍّ.[1]

O Allāh! I ask You for the good of what You give to the people be it of wealth, a spouse or children. Make it such that they are neither astray nor do they lead others astray.

Just as you get two types of children - righteous and unrighteous - you get two types of students. One is sincere and devoted while the other is insincere and free-minded. When we were studying in Dār al-ʿUlūm, we used to be occasionally affected by the H̲adīth lesson and the words of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The effect used to be with us when we returned to our rooms, so we would sit down silently. Some of the roommates would laugh and mock at us, and say: "Look at him! He studied H̲adīth and came, so he is silent now. He has been affected."

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[1] سنن الترمذي، كتاب الدعوات، باب ١٢٣، حديث ٣٥٨٦.

I am relating to you the condition in our madāris. Just yesterday I related to you the condition of ʿAlīgarh [University]. The people there were mocking at a student who had a beard. A teacher referred to the poor student as an owl merely because he had a beard. Nonetheless, if the situation in our madāris is as I described, what can be said about ʿAlīgarh!?

One thing is certain – Muslim boys study there and donations from Muslims are received by the institution. Consequently, one has to practise on the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* This is why we are surprised. That student will have to cry before Allāh *taʿālā* and beg Him to take his beard into consideration. In other words, Allāh *taʿālā* must change the hearts in such a manner that those who are maligning the beard today must sing its praises tomorrow.

I was studying Islam while some of my own relatives were studying English. I thought to myself that when they get top jobs and positions, they will scorn Dīnī education. So I made duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā* by saying: O Allāh! Please take my study of Dīn into consideration so that these people do not castigate and mock me, and do not have the opportunity of saying: “He studied Dīn, this is why he is so despicable and low.”[1]

I have a friend whose brother studied Western education and has a high post. When my friend

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[1] All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* for having blessed H̲ad̲rat with immense honour and wealth. This was clearly observed by the world. A very close relative had said to H̲ad̲rat’s mother: “How will your Maulwī S̲āh̲ib earn a living if he studies Dīn?” H̲ad̲rat’s mother must have certainly been grieved by this and must have made duʿā’ for him. (Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān)

decided to lead a religious life, his [Western educated] brother said: "Why should I stop a person from choosing a religious life?" When I heard this statement, I valued it immensely because if a person does not do good himself but thinks good of those who do good deeds, then I ask you: What is better, to be like him or to be like a person who does not do good himself and stop others from doing the same? It may well be that through the blessings of this one righteous person, his relatives will also be pardoned. A person should at least have this much of faith.

A person may study English, Hindi or whatever else he wants and wherever he wants – there is no objection. He can study every branch of knowledge. However, does this mean that he must destroy his īmān for it? Student days are days of severe tests and tribulations. This is the period when a person can come onto the straight path or go completely astray. Going astray means he studies the outward words only and causes Allāh's evidence to be established against him. He does not think about where he is, what he is doing and what he ought to be doing. His condition is most astonishing because he is studying Dīn, yet he is living a free life. Neither can his parents see to his training and rectification nor is the madrasah a place of rectification at that time. He has to think about his future himself. A student spends a considerable period of time in a madrasah, so he can make something of himself if he really wants. I have seen these places and am therefore speaking from experience.

I also noticed students returning from class where the teacher explained the differences of the imāms. When these students revise the lesson, they level objections against the seniors and elders. I never approved of

this practice. I used to think to myself: "O Allāh! These personalities are actually from among our teachers. They made extensive research and wrote books. A teacher may have the right to refute a view by presenting proofs, but we [students] have no right to utter anything against them. This is not research; it is disrespect. If this habit settles down in a person, it will remain with him for the rest of his life. He will acquire no knowledge and he will be deprived of the blessings of those pious and righteous personalities. After all, knowledge comes from being respectful and not from disrespect.

The pitiable condition of the madāris and khānqāhs

To sum up, I do not see much good in our madāris of today. there is differentiation between who is capable and who is not. Consequently, even from the biggest of madāris we cannot say with regard to even a handful of graduates that they are examples and true representatives of the pious personalities of the past, and that they want to work in the manner of their senior and elders. The same condition exists among the Sufis. Previously they used to pay special attention to education and spiritual training. Their fundamental principle was:

فأول قدم للمريد في هذه الطريقة ينبغي أن يكون على الصدق

It is essential that a murīd's first step in this path be on s̱idq.

They used to ensure that the seekers remained on this principle and tested them accordingly. This is why they emerged as people who made valuable contributions. Now they pay no attention to this; so these places have also deteriorated.

Thus, there is no sincerity here nor there. Everything is operating on the level of customs. The absence of a genuine soul has caused the khānqāhs and the madāris to become corrupt. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

RECTIFICATION OF INTENTION

Maulwī Qamar az-Zamān used to relate that a Maulwī Sāhib was invited to a jalsah in a certain village. The people decided among themselves that they will give him a topic which he will not be able to speak on. Subsequently, they asked him to speak on the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

Do you see! This is the type of Dīnī jalsah of today's time – the ignoramuses give the ʿālim the topic and they tell him what to speak on. Very well, give him the topic. However, their intention is to render him incapable and he must fail in delivering the talk. I ask you, how is it to do such a thing? What can I tell you about a jalsah whose objective is to cause an ʿālim to fail? Let's assume the ʿālim is not able to speak on the topic which you gave him, then I ask you: If your ʿulamā' and seniors are going to fail, how will you ever pass?

When that Maulwī Sāhib delivered his talk on the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the audience was stupefied and the people said: "We have been hosting jalsahs of this nature for the past 25 years but no one ever spoke so well on the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and we never heard anything so beautiful." The Maulwī Sāhib passed the test by virtue of his capability and excellent speech, while the masses had left no stone unturned to ensure his failure.

I am informing you about the nature of your jalsahs and the intention which the hosts have. Whereas a Hadīth states:

Actions are based on intentions.

The 'ulamā' explain this Hadīth often and the people also know it, but when it is the occasion to rectify their intention, they do not rectify it. Thus, the benefit and blessing are according to the intention. If this is the condition of the intention of the organizers of the jalsah, you can well imagine what type of goodness and blessing will emanate from such a jalsah.

In the same way, those who are listening to the lecture do not have correct intentions. A Maulwī Sāhib was delivering a talk in a certain jalsah. Whenever he happened to stop or pause in-between, the people would say among themselves: "The Maulwī Sāhib has run out of fuel." Did you see the belief which the masses have about their 'ulamā'. They come to listen to his talk, it appears they have come for the sake of Dīn, whereas as it is pure materialism which is lurking inside them. They come to test the speaker. If he can speak continuously for a few hours – irrespective of whether they can understand what he is saying or not – then they are attracted to him and consider him to be a senior scholar. But if a speaker speaks slowly or pauses in-between for whatever reason, the people fail him. I ask you: What is this? People are only worried about the outer word, they pay no attention to the meaning.

Similar is the case of those delivering the lectures. When they realized that the masses are more concerned about words, they too began practising oratory. Acquiring Allāh's pleasure is no longer the objective of delivering a talk, rather it is to please the masses. Whereas the very meaning of nīyyat is to do something solely for Allāh's pleasure. This is also the meaning of ikhlās. Delivering lectures, advising and admonishing the people are undoubtedly the Sunnat

practices of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām.* The rank of a lecturer or speaker is surely a lofty rank, but only when it is done with sincerity. If it is done for other objectives such as wealth and authority, then the ʿulamā’ have listed it among the deviations of the Jews and Christians. The following is stated in *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*:

التذكير على المنابر للوعظ والاتعاظ سنة الأنبياء والمرسلين، ولرياسة ومال وقبول عامة من ضلالة اليهود والنصارى.[1]

To remind and advise people from the pulpits is a Sunnat practice of the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām. But if it is done for position, wealth and popularity, then it is from among the deviations of the Jews and Christians.

I never used to attend jalsahs and similar gatherings. This is why people removed me from their brotherhood. I happened to go to a certain place where there was a jalsah. Some people were assembled around me after maghrib. I said to them: “Go to the jalsah and listen to the talk.” A few of them went while most of them remained. I asked them: “Why are you not going?” They replied: “We do not feel like going.” Then they began requesting me to give a talk. Since I do not attend jalsahs, I declined. But when they insisted, I had to give in.

The first thing which I said to them was: “You people are most probably expecting a powerful speech, so I am putting an end to this expectation. You can either cease all your expectations and listen to what I have to say or you can get up and leave.”

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[1] شامي، ج ٢، ص ٢٧٩.

I then related this H̲adīth in which H̲ad̲rat ʿĀ'ishah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* says that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not speak (swiftly) like how you people speak today. Rather, he used to speak at a very slow pace with many pauses in-between.[1] I also said to them: "You people are probably accustomed to the opposite. Now a person [referring to himself] is going to speak like this, so listen."

In short, whenever I have to deliver a talk, I speak as I normally converse with people. Consequently, I noticed that people's inclinations changed and many of them say that they do not enjoy listening to the talks of others.

The fact of the matter is that the spoken word has to descend into the heart – this is the benefit of a talk. If it makes no impression on the hearts of the audience, how can it be referred to as a lecture? However, in order to create an impression in the hearts of others, the speaker himself must first be affected by the themes of the Qur'ān and H̲adīth. If he is himself affected, he will be able to affect others. This is the essence. As for speaking flowingly, eloquently and displaying one's oratory skills which are not for Allāh's pleasure – these are of no significance. In fact, the texts speak out against such speeches.

A H̲adīth states:

إن أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان.[2]

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[1] الترمذي، أبواب المناقب عن رسول الله، ٤٦، حديث ٣٦٣٩.

[2] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ١، ص ٢٨٩، حديث ١٤٣.

The thing which I fear the most for my ummat is a person who possesses a lot of verbal knowledge while hypocrisy is in his heart (i.e. he has corrupt beliefs).

Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to the hypocrites:

يَحْلِفُوْنَ بِاللّٰهِ لَكُمْ لِيُرْضُوْكُمْ ج وَاللّٰهُ وَرَسُوْلُهُ أَحَقُّ أَنْ يُّرْضُوْهُ إِنْ كَانُوْا مُؤْمِنِيْنَ.

They swear to you by Allāh in order to please you [O Muslims], while it is imperatively necessary to please Allāh and His Messenger, if they possess īmān.

This is polytheism. In other words, if a certain matter is to be for Allāh *taʿālā* alone and someone/something else is included in it, then it is referred to as polytheism.

If this is the case of the organizers of the jalsah, the audience and the speakers – that there is no sign of sincerity in any of them, then of what value is an action which is devoid of sincerity in the court of Allāh *taʿālā*? We may rejoice over the success of a jalsah and the speaker may be happy over the fact that the people thoroughly enjoyed his speech, but what we have to see is if the jalsah was successful in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

The way to make a jalsah successful

When I explain these points to people, they assume that I am against jalsahs. I do not want to stop anyone from having a jalsah, but what I do want is to show people the way to make a jalsah acceptable according to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The fact that you like speeches on the sīrat (life of Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam)*

demonstrates that you have excellent taste. However, it is not right to restrict the sīrat to just a few things. After all, in the life of Rasūlullāh _s_allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam there is fear and submission as well. Many of his duʿā's contain the theme of begging Allāh *taʿālā* for His fear. Observe a few duʿā's of Rasūlullāh _s_allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اقْسِمْ لَنَا مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ مَا تَحُوْلُ بِهِ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ مَعَاصِيْكَ.[١]

O Allāh! Give us such a portion of Your fear whereby it would come as a barrier between us and committing acts of disobedience against You.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْ حُبَّكَ اَحَبَّ الْاَشْيَآءِ اِلَيَّ، وَاجْعَلْ خَشْيَتَكَ اَخْوَفَ الْاَشْيَآءِ عِنْدِيْ.[٢]

O Allāh! Make Your love the most beloved of things to me and make Your fear the most fearful of things in my sight. Cut off from me the needs of this world.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ اَخْشَاكَ كَاَنِّيْ اَرٰكَ اَبَدًا حَتّٰى اَلْقَاكَ، وَاَسْعِدْنِيْ بِتَقْوَاكَ وَلَا تُشْقِنِيْ بِمَعْصِيَتِكَ.[٣]

O Allāh! Make me one who fears You as though I am seeing You all the time until I meet You. Bestow me

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[1] ترمذي، باب ٧٩، حديث ٣٥٠٢.

[2] كنز العمال، ج ٢، ص ١٨٢.

[3] مناجات مقبول. وفي كنز العمال: اَللّٰهُمَّ اجْعَلْنِيْ اَخْشَاكَ حَتّٰى كَاَنِّيْ اَرٰكَ اَبَدًا حَتّٰى اَلْقَاكَ، وَاَسْعِدْنِيْ بِتَقْوَاكَ وَلَا تُشْقِنِيْ بِمَعْصِيَتِكَ

with the good fortune of obedience to You and do not condemn me with disobedience to You.

Fear and submission of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* were in his life because Allāh *taʿālā* said:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* states that Paradise is the abode for His fearing servants. This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* surpassed all in this regard. He himself feared Allāh *taʿālā* and taught his followers to do the same.

Now I ask you, if this is also the way of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, why is it not spoken about? The fact of the matter is that in order to know all these conditions and situations, it is necessary for a person to know his own self, to know Allāh *taʿālā*, to know Paradise and Hell, the accounting of deeds. Only then can he receive a portion of some fear and submission. Fear of Allāh *taʿālā* is no ordinary thing. When Allāh's fear enters a believer's heart, it melts him just as water melts salt. Fear and hope are two essential qualities of a believer.

يَرْجُوْنَ رَحْمَتَهٗ وَيَخَافُوْنَ عَذَابَهٗ

Believers are hopeful of Allāh's mercy and fearful of His punishment.[2]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] Sūrah Banī Isrāʾīl, 17: 57.

Fear for the Hereafter

A believer's heart contains fear. A person requested H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* to intercede on a certain matter. H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* said: "I consider this intercession to be impermissible because this is the time for me to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, I will not do this."

While on the subject of fear, I recall an incident concerning H̲ad̲rat Khwājah ʿAzīz al-H̲asan Majdhūb *rah̲imahullāh*. Khwājah S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* related to H̲ad̲rat (i.e. to H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*): I went on an inspection [to a school]. I passed by a class in which the teacher was facing away from the students and explaining something to them on the board. I stood at the door outside the class. When he turned around and saw me, he got terrified and fell down unconscious." After relating this to H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh*, H̲ad̲rat Khwājah S̲āh̲ib said to him: "H̲ad̲rat, from this incident my mind went to our state of unconsciousness before Allāh *taʿālā* on the day of Resurrection. If this teacher became so terrified at seeing a human just like himself and fell unconscious, what will the condition of the creation be when it stands before Allāh *taʿālā*?"

When H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* heard this, he said: "You are most certainly correct. A believer undoubtedly fears Allāh *taʿālā*." We see that where Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires,…

He follows it with the words:

فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى

…then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* mentioned Paradise immediately after fear so that it creates a balance in those who fear Him, and the pain of fear is alleviated by hearing about Paradise.

Whatever we see happening around us today, the liberal attitude which people have towards Dīn, their boldness towards it, and their uttering whatever they like – all this is on account of an absence of fear. On the other hand, if fear enters a person's heart, his tongue becomes dumb and he does not even feel like saying anything. A Hadīth states:

الحياء والعي (أي قلة الكلام كما في الترمذي) شعبتان من الإيمان

Modesty and speaking less are departments of īmān.

In other words, when a person has modesty in his heart, his īmān increases his concern for the Hereafter, and his tongue remains silent from frivolous and useless conversations.

A Hadīth states:

والبذاء والبيان شعبتان من النفاق[٢]

Obscene language and smooth-talking are departments of hypocrisy.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2]الترمذي، كتاب البر، باب ما جاء في العي، باب ٨٠، حديث ٢٠٢٧.

Both are departments of hypocrisy because they are connected to the tongue. A hypocrite is all words while his heart is empty.

What I am trying to show you is that if you like sīrat as a topic and you like to hear talks on this subject, why are themes on fear and submission not explained? After all, these are also intrinsic parts of the sīrat. I am most grieved by the condition of those ʿulamā' who allow the ignoramuses to become their examiners. The failure and success of an ʿālim is now in the hands of the ignoramuses. They can pass or fail whoever they like. Whereas if one of these ignorant fellows is made to stand up and give a talk, he will not be able to utter even two words. Yet he is ready to supervise the ʿulamā' and test them!

The fact of the matter is that an ignorant person looks at the words only while an ʿālim is concerned about the reality and the meaning. Since the laity cannot fathom the meanings and realities, they remain hungry for words. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say:

> A few villagers went to a certain person. He asked them: *"Tumhāre kasht zār gandam par taqātur amtār huwā yā nahī?"* (which simply means, did rain fall on your wheat farm?). [Bearing in mind that he used such high words in his question] the villagers spoke among themselves and said: "Come, let's go, he is reading the Qur'ān at the moment."

What was the need to speak so high language? If the person was really an ʿārif (intelligent man), he would not have fallen into such vanities. Nowadays people do not acquire understanding so that they could have some affinity with the meanings. They are only

interested in words. It is certainly not easy to be an ʿārif. This is why it is so necessary to remain in the company of an expert ʿārif. But there is no importance given to this at all in our times.

In the course of my stay in Lucknow, I heard a hakīm saying to another hakīm: "Do you know how the art of medicine was destroyed?" He then gave the answer himself: "Medicine was destroyed by the destruction of the clinic." In other words, no importance was given to the clinic. When I heard this, I thought to myself: These people are saying with regard to their field which I have been saying about the Tarīqah. Just as I am crying over the destruction of the Tarīqah, these people are crying over the destruction of their field. I then concluded that the art of medicine was destroyed because it too needs skill and expertise; and this entails a lot of work. This is why people turned away from it and considered mere theoretical knowledge to be sufficient. Whereas, whether it is medicine or any other field, mere books are not enough. The most a person can obtain from books is definitions and terminologies. As for expertise, experience, manner of treatment, etc. these can only be gained by remaining in the company of a doctor in his clinic. When no attention was given to this, the science of medicine disappeared.

The same is the condition with the Tarīqah. People assumed that books alone are sufficient to understand the Tarīqah. They feel that Arabic, Urdu and Persian books are easily accessible; and they can understand Dīn and the Tarīqah by reading them. This is a totally wrong notion. A person may get the knowledge and become conversant with the terms and terminologies of the Tarīqah, but knowledge alone is not enough. The need is to imbibe those qualities. And this cannot

be done from a book. Rather, it needs the company of a qualified shaykh. Nowadays people are not only showing disregard to this need, they are rejecting it. Whereas affinity, tranquillity, spiritual ecstasy and so on can only be obtained in the Ṯarīqah through the company of the Sufi masters. This is affirmed by the statement of the ẖakīm s̱āẖib who said that medicine has been destroyed through the disregard which is shown to the clinic.

Prerequisites for acquiring knowledge

You all know fully well that no branch of knowledge can be learnt without a teacher. Knowledge will most certainly be acquired if a qualified teacher is found, the student has a genuine desire to learn, and he also has respect for his teacher and his field of study. The same ẖakīm s̱āẖib who said that the art of medicine was destroyed by the disregard shown to the clinic was speaking highly of one of his early students who qualified 20 years ago and is employed in a certain place. Despite this, he is so respectful and humble that whenever he gets an opportunity, he comes into the clinic, sits in the rear and writes prescriptions. The ẖakīm s̱āẖib said: "There are times when I do not even know that he has come in. Only later on I realize that he is sitting in the back."

The ẖakīm was saying this to show that although his student qualified so many years ago, he does not consider himself to be independent. Furthermore, he shows the same respect as he did when he was a student. These are the qualities which draw the affection and attention of the teacher, and are most beneficial for a student.

It is so sad that the factor which was essential for the acquisition of knowledge has disappeared not only

from the external sciences but from the T̲arīqah as well. Showing respect and being mindful of etiquette are of utmost importance.

اَلطُّرُقُ كُلُّهَا آدَابُ – اَدِّبُوا النَّفْسَ اَيُّهَا الْاَصْحَابُ

The T̲arīqah is sound etiquette in its entirety. O friends! Teach etiquette to your selves.

The need for etiquette before the mashā'ikh

Nowadays when people go to the mashā'ikh, they go without respect and sincerity, and they consider themselves independent of their knowledge and practice. What benefit and blessings will they acquire in such a situation?

I constantly say that nothing can be achieved by merely making a saint a source of blessings. The things which ought to be made sources of blessings are the Qur'ān and Sunnat. Now if you do not make the knowledge and practice of a person a source of blessing, and only his body, then what type of spirituality is this? And how can this ever be something to be desired? It is merely physical, in fact, it stems from the desires of the carnal self.

Brother! If you go to a person, acquire knowledge, practice and sincerity from him. Only then will your coming and going be of benefit. If not, you will be deluding yourself. You will be thinking to yourself that you have a bond with a certain saint while you are totally devoid of the effects of that bond. Coming and going of this nature is absolutely useless. You are wasting your own time and wasting the time of others.

Listen attentively to what I am saying and ponder over it. If not, you will listen to talks and speeches on the sīrat but its greatness and respect will not have the

slightest effect on you. In this way, you will be totally empty after the talk as you were before it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

THE MEANING OF IKHLĀS̱

A major difficulty nowadays is that the realities have become concealed and there is no one to teach them. When there is no knowledge of a thing, how will it be possible to put it into practice and to adopt it in one's life? I believe that ikhlās̱ (sincerity) is the most essential need not only in our time but in every era. There is probably no other thing which is so vital. Whatever damage we see in our religious and worldly works is because of a lack of ikhlās̱ or an absence of it. The funny thing about it is that the more essential it is, the further away we are from it and ignorant of it.

I want to speak on this at present. May Allāh *taʿālā* make its reality clear to you people as well.

The first thing you need to understand is that ikhlās̱ is a thing of the heart and is an internal state. However, once this quality forms in a person and he is embellished by it, it does not remain concealed from others. Rather, the sincerity of a sincere person emanates from his heart just as the fragrance of a flower is inhaled by others. Once ikhlās̱ embeds itself in a person's heart, his words, actions and life-situations are of a completely different level. His words, actions and life-situations become signs and indications of his ikhlās̱.

The different angles of ikhlās̱

Now try to understand this: People have different conditions, and Allāh *taʿālā* gave them different temperaments. Furthermore, the capabilities of people are also diverse. One person is wealthy, another is eloquent in speech, another is physically strong, while another is hardworking and aloof. Another has strong

relationships, while another is an ardent worshipper, an ascetic and has a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā*.

Consequently, their ikhlā<u>s</u> has different hues and colours. In other words, a wealthy person can prove his sincerity by spending his wealth, while an eloquent person can help and assist a person through good and encouraging words – this will be his ikhlā<u>s</u>.

A poet rightly said:

لا خيل عندك تهديها ولا مال – فليسعد النطق إن لم يسعد الحال

You neither have a horse nor wealth which you could present as a gift. If your [financial] position cannot bring you joy, let your kind words be a source of joy.

It is also possible for a person to help by running errands for another or – at least – make duʿā' for him in his heart. This is also ikhlā<u>s</u> and he will be included among the sincere ones. I wanted to make this point clear because I do not know from where people got this notion that ikhlā<u>s</u> means to spend your wealth at times when it is needed. Does ikhlā<u>s</u> mean wealth? This is a mistake.

You can help a person by running errands for him, saying kind and consoling words to him or merely saying that you are with him. If ikhlā<u>s</u> only means spending your wealth, then only the wealthy people will be the mukhli<u>s</u>īn (sincere ones) and the poor people will have no way of demonstrating their sincerity. Whereas it is gauged from the texts that Allāh *taʿālā* referred to those people who could not take part in jihād because of poverty as sincere people. The reason for this is that although they could not take part in jihād due to poverty, their condition displayed their sincerity. Their sincerity from within spoke out and showed that they are sincere people.

Although they did not join in the jihād, it caused them much grief and sadness. Their intense grief caused them to cry. Allāh *taʿālā* then revealed the following verses to console them:

إِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَسْتَأْذِنُوْنَكَ وَهُمْ أَغْنِيَآءُ

[There is] certainly a way of reproach against those who ask you leave while they are wealthy.[1]

Before this, Allāh *taʿālā* said:

لَيْسَ عَلَى الضُّعَفَآءِ وَلَا عَلَى الْمَرْضٰى وَلَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ لَا يَجِدُوْنَ مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ حَرَجٌ إِذَا نَصَحُوْا لِلّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ط مَا عَلَى الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ مِنْ سَبِيْلٍ ط وَاللّٰهُ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ. وَّلَا عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ إِذَا مَآ أَتَوْكَ لِتَحْمِلَهُمْ قُلْتَ لَآ أَجِدُ مَآ أَحْمِلُكُمْ عَلَيْهِ ص تَوَلَّوْا وَّأَعْيُنُهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ حَزَنًا أَلَّا يَجِدُوْا مَا يُنْفِقُوْنَ.

There is no sin on the weak, the sick nor on those who do not have anything to spend provided they are sincere to Allāh and His Messenger. There is no way of reproach against the righteous. Allāh is forgiving, merciful. Nor [is there a way of reproach] against those who came to you so that you may provide them with conveyances and you said: "I do not have anything upon which I could convey you." They turned away, their eyes flowing with tears out of sorrow that they do not have that which they could spend.[2]

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 93.

[2] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 91-92.

The difference between a sincere and insincere person is made very clear in these verses. The insincere ones were the wealthy people. They had the material resources coupled with health and strength. Despite this, they were asking for leave from going for jihād. On the other hand, the sincere ones could not join because they did not have the resources. They suffered immense grief and were reduced to tears for not being able to join.

The gist of all this is that a sincere person is always on the look out for occasions when he could join his beloved in his grief. If a person does not have this worry, he is certainly insincere.

Note: What a beautiful proof to differentiate between sincerity and insincerity from these verses. It is indeed the fruit of the knowledge and cognition of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

THE ORDER FOR IKHLĀS̲

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَمَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوْا لِقَآءَ رَبِّهٖ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَّلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهٖ أَحَدًا

Whoever hopes to meet his Lord should do righteous deeds and should not ascribe anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord.[1]

Meeting Allāh

This verse teaches us that good deeds and abstaining from polytheism are the means to meet Allāh *taʿālā*. The essence of this is that a person must worship his Lord with full devotion. The words "should do righteous deeds" instruct the doing of good deeds while the words "should not ascribe anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord" instruct ikhlās̲ – sincerity and devotion.

Sometimes Allāh *taʿālā* expresses ikhlās̲ with the very same word. For example:

وَمَا أُمِرُوْا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ

They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone].[2]

In the above verse, Allāh *taʿālā* uses the word *mukhlis̲īn* which is derived from ikhlās̲.

At other times He expresses it as follows:

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1 Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 110.

2 Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ اَحَدًا

And should not ascribe anyone as a partner in the worship of his Lord.

We learn from this that it is actually a tafsīr of khulūs [which is also derived from ikhlās]. The reason for expressing it with this word is obvious, viz. khulūs means khālis (pure). In other words, when something is not adulterated by another substance. For example, milk will be referred to as pure only if water has not been added to it.

In the same way, an act of worship will be khālis if it is free from all apart from Allāh *ta'ālā*. If someone or something is included in the worship of Allāh *ta'ālā*, there can be no khulūs in it.

This is why the exegists quote many narrations which speak out against ostentation in their commentary to this verse.

عن محمود بن لبيد رضي الله عنه أن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: إن أخوف ما أخاف عليكم الشرك الأصغر، قالوا يا رسول الله، وما الشرك الأصغر. قال الرياء.[1]

وزاد البيهقي في شعب الإيمان يقول الله لهم يوم يجازي العباد بأعمالهم إذهبوا إلى الذين كنتم تراؤن في الدنيا فانظروا هل تجدون عندهم جزاء وخيرا.[2]

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[1] مسند أحمد، ج ٣٩، ص ٣٩، حديث ٢٣٦٣٠.

[2] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٥، ص ٣٣٣، حديث ٦٨٣١.

H̲ad̲rat Mah̲mūd ibn Labīd rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The thing which I fear the most for you is minor polytheism." The S̲ah̲ābah asked: "What is minor polytheism?" He replied: "Ostentation."

Al-Bayhaqī rah̲imahullāh adds the following in his narration: On the day when Allāh taʿālā will recompense His servants for their deeds, He will say to them: "Go to those before whom you were showing off your deeds in the world and see if you can find any reward and good from them."

Another H̲adīth states:

قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إذا جمع الله الأولين والآخرين ببقيع واحد ينفذهم البصر ويسمعهم الداعي، قال أنا خير شريك كل عمل كان عمل لي في دار الدنيا كان لي فيه شريك فأنا أدعه اليوم ولا أقبل اليوم إلا خالصا.[1]

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When Allāh taʿālā gathers all the past and latter peoples on a field where every person will be able to see everything and hear the announcement of the announcer, He will say: "I am an excellent partner. Every deed which was done for Me in the world and another partner was joined to Me in it, I distance Myself from it today. Today I will accept nothing but what was done purely for Me.

We learn from this that Allāh *taʿālā* only accepts what is khālis̲ (pure). When the 'ulamā' constantly speak about sincerity in acts of worship and stress its

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[1] المعجم الكبير للطبراني، ج ٧، ص ٢٩٠، حديث ٧١٦٨.

adoption, they do it on the basis of the verse which was quoted at the beginning.

THE IMPORTANCE OF IKHLĀS̲ AND AKHLĀQ

(1)

The first essential when treading the road to Allāh *taʿālā* is sincerity. Then it is necessary for a person to set right and reform his character and habits. This is because the senior saints have written that without sound character, the person cannot even develop the capability of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* let alone even reaching Him.

Sincerity and devotion are connected to the heart and known best by Allāh *taʿālā*. Aside from this, it means that when a person places his foot on this field, it must be solely for the acquisition of Allāh's pleasure. There must be no worldly motive for it. Rectification of character means that a person needs to purify his heart of the evil qualities which are lurking there, e.g. pride, anger, jealousy, haughtiness, hypocrisy and so on. He must then embellish his heart with noble characteristics such as humility, forbearance, sincerity and so on. Together with all this, he must set right his dealings, purify his transactions and be transparent in the fulfilling of rights.

The gist of this is that he must clear his relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*, and set right his dealings and relations with his fellow humans. The perfection of these two is known as tas̲awwuf. Man must therefore focus on setting right these two at the very beginning.

(2)

When I say these things to you, I do not say them without any good reason. Rather, I think about them carefully after having observed the prevailing conditions and situations, and after seeing the need to

say them to you. I am seeing with my open eyes that the condition of people has become corrupt. In addition to worldly places, even our religious centres are starting to succumb to these evils. A task has not even commenced properly and its end manifests itself in the form of corruption. The reason for this is that people are not prepared to appoint someone as their senior and mentor so that they could all unite under him. Since the temperaments of people differ, it is inevitable for differences to form among them.

The only way to protect ourselves from this is to appoint someone whom we will follow. And when differences arise, people must cast aside their personal temperaments and demands, and adopt the way of their leader. If this is realized, there will be no disharmony.

Look! A shaykh has many murīds and they all obviously differ immensely as regards their temperaments. However, since the shaykh is a qualified shaykh, he is able to bring them together notwithstanding the differences in their temperaments. Just as these people assemble around despite their natural differences, when they part ways, they can assemble on his creed on the basis of their bond with him and their confidence in him. Consequently, if the temperament of a person prompts him to differ with another person, he can suppress it by thinking to himself that both of them are affiliated to the same shaykh and both of them are receiving blessings and benefits from the same person. He must think to himself: "This is the creed of my shaykh in this matter, so I too must adopt the same creed." If people adopt this approach, differences will most certainly come to an end.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a useful piece of advice which is most certainly based on experience. It is a radiant lamp for us – especially those who are affiliated to Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* – which has to be put into practice. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

There were so many differences in the temperaments of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. A Hadīth states:

أرحم أمتي بأمتي أبو بكر، وأشدهم في أمر الله عمر[1]

The most merciful person towards my ummat is Abū Bakr while the most stern in the matters of Allāh taʿālā is ʿUmar.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* describes one as being most merciful and the other as most stern. Why did he say this? It was solely because of the difference in their temperaments. Despite this, bearing in mind that all the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* loved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* intensely and were – so to speak – dyed in his colour, they were mutually united and mutually one. Each Sahābī would think about the other: "He is drinking from the same fountain which I am drinking from." This is why there was mutual love, affinity and harmony among them. This is the solution to putting an end to our mutual differences.

When this point came to my mind, I was most satisfied and happy with it. It is something to remember and very beneficial and useful.

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[1] الترمذي، باب ٣٢، حديث ٣٧٩٠، أبواب المناقب، ٤٦.

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* wrote in his *Mathnawī* that if a person is caught up in a sin, he must neither take an oath nor make a promise to extricate himself from it because this causes a greater burden on the self. He ends up having to break his promise repeatedly. He must make a firm intention and resolution in his heart that he will not commit that evil, and take courage to abstain from it. By making a promise or taking an oath, the self thinks that the person has imprisoned it completely. It therefore spends all its energies to maintain its freedom by causing the person to break his promise. This is not the manner of rectification. Some people are overtaken by their emotions, take oaths, vows, and so on verbally; but they do not succeed. The reason is what I explained just now. Understand this point well.

(4)

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* wrote in his *Mathnawī* that one cannot rely even on the creed of a foolish person. He added that the one who cannot differentiate between who is <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Dāwūd *'alayhis salām* and who is not is a foolish person. In other words, if a person cannot differentiate between who has freed himself from his carnal self and who has not is a foolish person. When a foolish one takes an oath over a certain matter, do not rely on it. If he cannot even differentiate and is absolutely stupid, then whatever he says will most certainly include his stupidity. He will not have the slightest connection with the intellect. How, then, can he ever be relied on or taken into consideration!?

THE BLESSING OF IKHLĀS

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* relates an incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* in his *Mathnawī*. I will relate this incident to you and then try to extract a ruling from it. Listen attentively.

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was in jihād when he overpowered an unbeliever and was about to kill him. The man spat on the face of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He released him immediately and abstained from killing him. The unbeliever was astonished and asked: "You had overpowered me and was on the verge of killing me. I then had the audacity of spitting on your face. Instead of being more intent on killing me, you released me. What is the reason for this?"

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* replied: "I was killing you solely for Allāh's sake, but when you spat on my face, my self urged me to become angry at you. The act which I was doing solely for Allāh's sake now became adulterated by a demand of my carnal self. My anger was reduced to a little for Allāh *taʿālā* and a little for my self. In other words, my self prompted me to exact revenge for this audacity; and partnership in Allāh's worship is not permissible. This is why I restrained myself from killing you. Furthermore, you do not even belong to me whereby I could have done anything I like with you. You are Allāh's creation and belong to Him. I only have the right to do with you as Allāh orders. Partnership in Allāh's worship is not permissible. Since the act which was solely for Allāh's sake became adulterated by a desire of my self, I released you."

When the unbeliever heard these words of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, an effulgence appeared in his heart

by virtue of the sincerity of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He broke of his religious band from around his hand and said: "We were under the impression that you people are wronging us, whereas it is we who are wronging you people by coming out to fight you. I thought you were fighting and killing for material riches and authority. But now, the high level of your actions and character has manifested itself. I now cast aside my family and consider myself to be a part of your family. Dictate the kalimah shahādah to me, and illuminate me with that lamp from which you found light."

The man together with about 18 members of his family embraced Islam with much enthusiasm and love. Now look, through the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī's forbearance, an enemy was turned into a friend. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> The sword of forbearance is sharper than the sword of steel.

If it was us, we would have been far quicker to kill the unbeliever for his audacious act. We would have revelled over our action and thought to ourselves that we conveyed an unbeliever to Hell for Allāh's sake. Look at the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* that so many people obtained release from Hell, became eligible for Paradise and became true Muslims.

Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* releasing an unbeliever at a time when he had overpowered him completely, and that too after he committed such an audacity, is based on absolute and total devotion to Allāh *taʿālā*. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> Learn about sincerity in actions from Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*.

When the unbeliever was released, a person like him would normally take the opportunity to flee and save his life. Where will he ever think of investigating and inquiring? This too was through the blessing of Hadrat ʿAlī's sincerity. Instead of fleeing, he asks Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* the reason for his action.

The eternal lesson which we learn from this incident is that when there remains no sincerity in an action, it must be given up. The other point we learn is that he left him out of his sincerity. Thus, just as there are blessings in doing an action with sincerity, there will be blessings in it if it is left out of sincerity. After all, the objective is neither doing the action nor leaving it out. The objective is Allāh's pleasure.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* exposed to the ummat! (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

This incident was not with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* because he was maʿsūm(divinely protected against sin). There is no question of the self influencing him. The incident occurred with a Companion of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* so that it becomes a lesson until the day of Resurrection for the ummat that it is possible for an action to be initiated with sincerity and to become adulterated by the carnal self later on. However, by virtue of their company with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* acquired such effulgence from him that if any personal motive entered an action, they would identify it immediately through that effulgence. In this incident, the self tried to influence, but through the light which the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* acquired from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* overpowered it, recognized the

dark impediment and was saved from being adulterated by it.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were not maʿsūm but they enjoyed a strong affiliation with the maʿsūm one, i.e. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Therefore, the blessing of the maʿsūm one would reach them on such occasions and Allāh *taʿālā* used to save them. Someone rightly said:

صل يا رب على من هو من عصمته – يعصمه الحق محبيه من الخناس

O Allāh! Send Your pure mercy to the one through whose innocence you save his beloveds from Shaytān.

A person's sincerity is only recognized when he is confronted by an impediment, and when the self overpowers him, the strength and light of his īmān defeats the demands of the self.

Allāh *taʿālā* describes His devoted and sincere servants as follows:

وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَا فَعَلُوْا فَاحِشَةً أَوْ ظَلَمُوْآ أَنْفُسَهُمْ ذَكَرُوا اللهَ فَاسْتَغْفَرُوْا لِذُنُوْبِهِمْ

Those who, when they commit an open sin or commit an evil to themselves, they remember Allāh and seek forgiveness for their sins.[1]

People of the past were very particular about ikhlās. They considered it very difficult and always feared its disappearance from their lives.

Now the situation is such that people just go on doing actions without paying any attention to ikhlās

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 135.

because it is no longer their objective. To make matters worse, they are immersed in compounded ignorance. In other words, they have no ikhlās whatsoever, and when they are told to adopt it, they reply in astonishment: “What! We are doing so many actions from so long, and we have no ikhlās!?”

I say: Yes, this is the fact. Nowadays people are fully occupied in showing off by day and night and are happy with these outward actions. They do not even think about ikhlās and do not want to acquire it. This is why they disregard any discussion about it. Whereas the pious elders were very particular about talking about it. The Qur’ān and Hadīth are filled with themes related to ikhlās.

أَلَا لِلّٰهِ الدِّيْنُ الْخَالِصُ

Listen! For Allāh alone is absolute devotion.[1]

فَاعْبُدِ اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصًا لَّهُ الدِّيْنَ

So worship Allāh in absolute devotion to Him.[2]

وَمَآ أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ

They were solely ordered to worship Allāh, devotedly worshipping Him [alone].[3]

There are many other verses on this theme.

It is easy to remain sincere from beginning to end when doing a certain action. In the same way, it is

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[1] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 3.

[2] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 2.

[3] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

easy to assume that one has sincerity from beginning to end when in actual fact he does not. However, commencing an action with sincerity, being faced with an impediment in-between, being able to identify the impediment and discarding it – all this is extremely difficult.

In the incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, it was really his genuine sincerity that the moment he suspected the slightest decrease in it, he discarded that action. He did not even bother about the fact that if he left his enemy it would entail his own humiliation, or that now he has been released, he will overpower him, cause him harm or even kill him.

In short, he did not bother about anything. Instead, just as he was fighting for Allāh's sake, he released the person for Allāh' sake. Just as he was sincere in the doing of the action, he was totally sincere in leaving it aside. Look at the level of his sincerity that despite being such a great and senior personality, he acknowledges to the kāfir that his self was stirred by his spitting on his face and his sincerity waned. The kāfir too recognized the level of his sincerity and Allāh-consciousness. Just look at how excellent the intentions of these people are! They have no hesitance in expressing their shortcoming for Allāh's sake.

We are Muslims from so long but we still do not understand the subject of sincerity. Instead, when I start talking on this subject people who are sitting right in front of me start napping. On the other hand, that man was a kāfir and when Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explained it to him, he gauged the perfect sincerity of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and became a Muslim – not by the sword but when the sword was withheld. Islam did not spread by the sword but by the character of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum.*

The kāfir understood this and embraced Islam with insight. This incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* became an example of ikhlās. In other words, it became an idiom on the subject of sincerity. The point which is learnt from this incident is that just as a person does an action with sincerity, there are times when he has to leave it out solely out of sincerity.

This historical incident of Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is well-known, but people only think about how many people became Muslims because of it. This point is certainly very great, but far more important is the basis and cause of this outcome. In other words, the absolute sincerity on account of which all these blessings were manifested. Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* taught the lesson of ikhlās by his actions. Now whoever adopts sincerity until the day of Resurrection, its reward will go to Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* as well. Tell me, if the blessings of such great and sincere personalities are displayed, will ours ever be displayed? All blessings are undoubtedly through ikhlās.

The story of Hadrat ʿUmar

When the Muslims laid siege to Bayt al-Maqdis (Jerusalem) during the caliphate of Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, the residents of the city said: "Call for your caliph because his description is found in our scriptures. If he is as described, we will open the gates of the fort without any battle and surrender the city to you."

The Muslim soldiers sent a message to Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and he left for Syria. He was wearing simple patched clothes and riding an ordinary camel. When the Muslim soldiers saw him, they said: "You are the caliph. You should wear more striking

garments and ride a horse.” H̱aḏrat ʿUmar *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* did as suggested. However, after just a few steps, he said to them: “My ego is getting the better of me because of these things. Bring my old clothes and my camel. I will wear them and ride on the camel.” He wore the same patched clothes once again and mounted his camel. He added:

نَحْنُ قَوْمٌ أَعَزَّنَا اللهُ بِالْإِسْلَامِ[1]

We are a people whom Allāh taʿālā elevated through Islam.

Look at the level of his ikhlāṣ! Although he was the Leader of the Believers and was proceeding towards the enemy, when the new garments stirred his self, he removed them and cast them aside. Also, look at the extent of his sincerity that he even admitted to his subjects that his ego is getting bloated because of these things.

H̱aḏrat ʿUmar *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* did this solely for Allāh’s sake and out of absolute sincerity. But Allāh *taʿālā* caused the blessings of his action to be displayed. When he reached the fort in that simple appearance, the enemy began comparing his description to what they had read in their scriptures. They found him to be exactly as described. Their scriptures even described the type of clothes he will be wearing and the conveyance which he will be riding. The residents of the city opened the gates of the fort and handed over the city to the Muslims.

H̱aḏrat ʿUmar *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* did not do all this so that the fort will be conquered; this was the fruit of his

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[1] البداية والنهاية، ج ٧، ص ٤٦.

sincerity. He did not even know what was written in their scriptures. He had done all this solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. Consequently, the blessings of his ikhlāṣ were displayed.

Look at the immense blessings which Allāh *taʿālā* displayed and manifested in these two incidents! Without a doubt, all blessings stem from ikhlāṣ.

Ḥaḍrat ʿAlī *raḍiyallāhu ʿanhu* wore a kurtah on one occasion and then made it defective by cutting its sleeves. He said: "My ego began to get the better of me after I put on this kurtah. This is why I made it defective."

My dear brothers! These people neither made the kurtah the objective, nor the camel, clothes and horse. Rather, they strengthened their intention with Allāh *taʿālā*. Where they saw or realized the slightest impediment to their sincerity or the influence of the self, they put an end to it and separated it from themselves.

Ḥaḍrat Maʿrūf Karkhī *raḥimahullāh* used to address his self:

أَخْلِصِيْ تَتَخَلَّصِيْ

O my self! Remain sincere and you will attain freedom.

The elders of Dīn used to renew their ikhlāṣ. Nowadays people renew everything but ikhlāṣ. Whereas ikhlāṣ is what is required by Allāh *taʿālā*. It is through ikhlāṣ that everything is realized.

If you people think that we are living in dangerous times, then do something. And the thing you have to do is to have true īmān in Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and cast aside the demands of your

self. Look at this duʿā’ of Rasūlullāh s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam:

وَلَا تُسَلِّطْ عَلَيْنَا مَنْ لَّا يَرْحَمُنَا[1]

O Allāh! Do not empower over us someone who will show no mercy to us.

We learn from this Ḫadīth that the one who is given power and authority over us is appointed by Allāh *taʿālā*. Thus, as long as we do not please Allāh *taʿālā*, we will not achieve anything. O dear servants of Allāh! Turn your focus towards Allāh *taʿālā* and adopt ikhlāṯ. The five s̱alāhs which you are performing, the Qur’ān which you are reading, the duʿā’ which you make to Allāh *taʿālā* – these are not small and insignificant actions. Develop ikhlās̱ in them and then you will see the blessings. You may consider a certain task to be difficult, but nothing is difficult for Allāh *taʿālā*. If He has power over everything, He most certainly has power over your conditions. Allāh's power is not limited.

اَلَا اِنَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيْطٌ

Allāh most certainly encompasses everything.

We have to continue making duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā*. When Muslims make duʿā’ to Him, He accepts it. This is clearly mentioned in the texts. You people engage in so many acts of worship, do you think they are not accepted? If they are not accepted, why do you do them? We conclude from this that they are most certainly accepted. Thus, make duʿā’ as well and it too will be accepted. You make duʿā’ but only where you

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[1]الترمذي، باب ٧٩، حديث ٣٥٠٢.

see the causes are favourable to you. As for those matters where the causes are not in your favour, you do not make duʿā’. Whereas Allāh *taʿālā* has power over everything.

Hadrat Zakarīyyā *ʿalayhis salām* was very old and his wife was barren. Despite this, he made duʿā’ to Allāh *taʿālā* and it was accepted. For something to be realized without the means is considered to be an extraordinary feat by us. However, Allāh *taʿālā* can create something without the means just as He can with the means. Both are the same to Him. During trying and difficult times, there is nothing better than duʿā’ for Muslims. All you have to do is please Allāh *taʿālā* and ask Him. He gives in abundance.

A judge relates: My father was a lawyer and I used to make duʿā’ for three things for him: (1) My father must give up his law practice. (2) He must go and perform hajj. (3) He must become a murīd of a certain saint. Allāh *taʿālā* accepted all three duʿā’s. That is, my father gave up his law practice, went to perform hajj and became a murīd of a certain saint.

Brothers! The acceptance of duʿā’ is not reserved for a judge or lawyer. You too must make duʿā’ with all your heart and it will be accepted.

Some Muslims could not emigrate from Makkah and the unbelievers of the city were imposing various types of torments and punishments on them. They too turned to Allāh *taʿālā* and made duʿā’ to Him. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes their duʿā’ in the Qur’ān:

وَاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ وَلِيًّا ۙ وَّاجْعَلْ لَّنَا مِنْ لَّدُنْكَ نَصِيْرًا

Appoint for us, from You, a supporter, and appoint for us, from You, a helper.[1]

Their duʿā’ was accepted, Allāh *taʿālā* sent Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to them as a helper, and Makkah was conquered.

When a servant makes duʿā’, he becomes very close to Allāh *taʿālā*. The more hope he has in the duʿā’, the more likely it is to be accepted. If we do not have the power to do anything else, we certainly have the power to make duʿā’. After all, we have to do whatever is within our power.

We must be convinced that the distressing situations we are witnessing are due to Allāh's displeasure and not because of the displeasure of our enemies. The pleasure or displeasure of our enemies is nothing.

Yes, man must not become restless and anxious. He will not be able to acquire the highest level of ikhlās̲ all at once. He has to continue striving and – by the will of Allāh *taʿālā* – he will eventually reach the level of perfection. As long as he cannot differentiate between the presence or absence of ikhlās̲ in an action, he must continue carrying it out. If he realizes that there is no ikhlās̲ in a certain action, he must give it up or strive to develop ikhlās̲ in it. The author of *Akhlāq Muh̲sinī* has devoted an entire chapter to ikhlās̲. He writes that ikhlās̲ means to purify an action from ostentation and other ulterior motives, and to make one's intention solely for Allāh *taʿālā*.

> The one who moves forward with ikhlās̲,
> he is the ʿĪsā of the era who is talking.

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[1] Sūrah an-Nisā’, 4: 75.

Whatever one does must be with the intention of pleasing Allāh *taʿālā*. Do not allow the self to interfere because motives of the carnal self destroy the actions which are to be done for Allāh *taʿālā*.

A caliph and a criminal

A caliph of Khurāsān ordered that a certain criminal be punished. While the caliph was still speaking, the criminal began hurling vulgar abuses at the caliph. The caliph ordered that he be released and let free. One of the guards said: "Why did you free him when he was actually deserving of even more punishment for having abused you?" The caliph replied: "I had been disciplining him solely for Allāh's sake, but when he began saying bad things to me, my self was stirred and I developed the urge to exact revenge from him. I did not feel it right to allow my self to interfere in a matter which I had been doing purely for Allāh's sake. Since it contradicts ikhlāṣ, I restrained myself from meting out the punishment to him.

> Once the demand of the self enters any action, how can ikhlāṣ remain in it?
>
> When there is no ikhlāṣ in a deed, it is better to give it up because it is of no benefit when it is devoid of ikhlāṣ.

May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us with ikhlāṣ. Āmīn.

Ḥaḍrat Maulānā Rashīd Aḥmad Gangohī

The following is stated in *Maktūbāt Rashīdīyyah*:

The fact of the matter is that the Hereafter is the fundamental objective. Man has been created to worship Allāh *taʿālā* and display his servitude to Him. It is therefore his obligatory responsibility to spend his night and day in doing actions and adopting character

which display his servitude, and the praise of Allāh *taʿālā*. He must spend his entire life in this and depart from this world with it. However, the problem is that this physical body cannot survive without food and drink. It therefore becomes necessary for the adoptions of means. After having eaten, the discharge of excreta, urine and fulfilment of lust become inevitable. Man has to overcome these demands and it becomes obligatory on him to make arrangements for them. These cannot be realized without intermingling with his own kind and species. This resulted in the need for clothes and other necessities. It became necessary to procure these.

Just for one worship he has to do all these things. If we were to calculate the time spent, we will conclude that most of his time is spent on acquiring all these means, while almost no time is spent on his fundamental objective. Allāh *taʿālā*, knowing that man is weak, excused him and laid down only five s̲alāhs in the day. By accepting this little worship, He made it equal to the worship of the entire day and night, and gave him the whole day and night for the fulfilment of his needs.

If a person is intelligent, he will realize that his eating and acquiring of other necessities are the means for his worship. He does all these things while thinking to himself that he will be able to worship Allāh *taʿālā*, then all will be considered to be acts of worship. As for the foolish person, he thinks that whatever he earns is for his comfort. His earning, spending, eating, sleeping and everything else are for worldly pleasures and enjoyment. He considers only his five times s̲alāh to be acts of worship.

This is our condition. The entire day is spent in heedlessness and all activities are for the carnal self.

Only salāh is an act of worship. If there are shortcomings and defects in salāh also, then all our earnings will be futilities. What can be done when the fundamental objective is lost!?[1]

Glory to Allāh! What an excellent theme! This is a special feature of the writings of our seniors. Even if you were to read just a few lines, you will certainly learn something worthy and useful. On the other hand, if you read the writings of other people, you will not be able to understand anything even if you were to read pages upon pages. The benefit that is found in the writings of our seniors is through the blessing of following the Sunnat and the fruit of their ikhlās.

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[1] *Maktūbāt Rashīdīyyah*, p. 67.

HONESTY AND SINCERITY

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَنْ يَّعْبُدُ اللهَ عَلٰى حَرْفٍ ۚ فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرُ ۨ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ ۚ وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ۨ انْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهِ ۚ خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ۗ ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ.

Among people is he who worships Allāh on the borderline: If prosperity reaches him, he remains steadfast on that worship [of Allāh]. But if adversity afflicts him, he turns about on his face. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. This is a clear loss.[1]

According to the exegists, this verse was revealed with reference to those who were uncertain and in doubt. When they found certain situations in Islam to be in line with their motives, they remained on Islam. Their remaining on it was not because they believed in the truthfulness of Islam but for the realization of their objectives and motives. For example, if the person's wife gave birth to a boy, his wealth increased or his horse gave birth to a foal, he would remain on Islam. If not, he would abandon Islam.

Thus, even this remaining on Islam was not based on sincerity. This condition was therefore blameworthy and chargeable on the basis of the filthy intention. Reference to this is made by the words:

فَإِنْ أَصَابَهُ خَيْرُ ۨ اطْمَأَنَّ بِهِ

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 11.

If prosperity reaches him, he remains steadfast on that worship [of Allāh].

Prosperity in this context refers to worldly prosperity and goodness which he desires. The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

والمراد من الخير الدنيوي كالرخاء والعافية والولد[1]

The word khayr refers to worldly goodness like prosperity, wellness and children.

The word itminān refers to remaining steadfast on his first condition as stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

اطمئن به أي ثبت على ما كان عليه ظاهرا إلا أنه اطمئن به اطمينان المؤمنين الذين لا يزحزحهم عاصف ولا يثنيهم عاطف.[2]

The itminān of believers is so firm that no fierce and strong wind can shake them, and nothing can cause them to turn around (it is because of this itminān that the self of a believer is referred to as a nafs mutma'innah).

Reference to this type of self is mentioned in the following verse:

يٰاَيَّتُهَا النَّفْسُ الْمُطْمَئِنَّةُ، اِرْجِعِيْ اِلٰى رَبِّكِ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً

O that soul that has acquired tranquillity. Return to your Lord – you pleased with Him, He pleased with you.[3]

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[1] روح المعاني، ج ١٧، ص ١٢٤.

[2] أيضا.

[3] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 27-28.

A supplication for the same tranquillity is mentioned in the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ نَفْسًا بِكَ مُطْمَئِنَّةً، تُؤْمِنُ بِلِقَآئِكَ، وَتَرْضٰى بِقَضَآئِكَ، وَتَقْنَعُ بِعَطَآئِكَ.[1]

O Allāh! I ask You for a self which is satisfied with You, has conviction in meeting You, remains happy with Your decree, and is satisfied with Your gifts.

The Ahlullāh refer to the same tranquillity in the following couplet:

> After 30 years it became clear to Khāqānī (man who is made from clay) that if he acquires the proximity of Allāh *taʿālā* for even a short while, it is better than the kingdom of Hadrat Sulaymān *ʿalayhis salām.*
>
> A single moment of focus on Allāh *taʿālā* is better than the power and authority of the kings and nations of the entire world.

The tranquillity which we are talking about is the fruit of ikhlās – sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to His sincere and devoted servants:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِيْ وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُوْنَ ؕ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْاَنْهٰرُ ؕ اُكُلُهَا دَآئِمٌ وَّظِلُّهَا ؕ تِلْكَ عُقْبَى الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا ۖ وَّعُقْبَى الْكٰفِرِيْنَ النَّارُ.

The description of Paradise which the righteous are promised: Rivers flow beneath it, its fruit is eternal, and

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[1] المعجم الكبير، ج ٨، ص ٩٩، حديث ٧٤٩٠.

so is its shade. This is the recompense for those who fear. And the retribution for the rejecters is the Hell-fire.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

إِنَّ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ إِنَّا لَا نُضِيْعُ أَجْرَ مَنْ أَحْسَنَ عَمَلًا. أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ جَنّٰتُ عَدْنٍ تَجْرِيْ مِنْ تَحْتِهِمُ الْأَنْهٰرُ يُحَلَّوْنَ فِيْهَا مِنْ أَسَاوِرَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ وَّيَلْبَسُوْنَ ثِيَابًا خُضْرًا مِّنْ سُنْدُسٍ وَّإِسْتَبْرَقٍ مُّتَّكِئِيْنَ فِيْهَا عَلَى الْأَرَآئِكِ ط نِعْمَ الثَّوَابُ ط وَحَسُنَتْ مُرْتَفَقًا.

Surely those who believed and did good deeds – We do not waste the recompense of he who did good. For such are gardens of eternity beneath which rivers flow. They will be adorned therein with bracelets of gold, and they will wear green clothes of fine and course silk, reclining therein on couches. What an excellent recompense and what a lovely resting place![2]

The excellent recompense for īmān and good deeds will be given in the Hereafter.

The other situation was that of tribulation and adversity. Reference is made to it as follows:

وَإِنْ أَصَابَتْهُ فِتْنَةُ ۨانْقَلَبَ عَلٰى وَجْهِهِ

But if adversity afflicts him, he turns about on his face.

There are some people who, when tested, go to the extent of turning on their heels and becoming apostates. They then level objections against Islam by

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[1] Sūrah ar-Raʿd, 13: 35.

[2] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 30-31.

claiming that they neither saw any good in it nor did they experience any goodness. It is therefore a bad religion according to them.

The seniors of the path state that this verse also refers to those who worship Allāh *taʿālā* during times of prosperity and abandon His worship totally when they are afflicted by adversity. There are many among us who fit this description.

ʿAllāmah Shāṯibī *raẖimahullāh* discusses this issue in his *Muwāfaqāt* under the same verse which is the subject of our discussion. He writes:

إن وصل إلى ما طلب فرح به وصار هو قصده من التعبد فقوي في نفسه مقصوده وضعفت العبادة، وإن لم يصل رمى بالعبادة وربما كذب بنتائج الأعمال التي يهبها الله لعباده المخلصين، وقد روي أن بعض الناس سمع الحديث "من أخلص لله أربعين صباحا ظهرت ينابيع الحكمة من قلبه على لسانه."[1] فتعرض لذلك لينال الحكمة فلم يفتح له بابها فبلغت القصة بعض الفضلاء فقال هذا أخلص للحكمة ولم يخلص لله.[2]

If the worshipper realized his objective in the worship, he is overjoyed (even if it is out of haughtiness), after all, this was the objective of his worship. His objective then strengthens within him while worship becomes weak (i.e. the awe which he has for the act of worship is weak in comparison to his objective). If he does not realize his objective, he discards worship and even goes to the extent of rejecting the consequences of

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[1] حلية الأولياء، ج ٥، ص ٢١٥.

[2] الموافقات، ج ٢، ص ٤٠٣.

actions which Allāh taʿālā confers to His devoted servants (by saying that no one received anything). A person heard the following Hadīth: "The person who worships Allāh taʿālā devotedly for 40 days will experience fountains of wisdom gushing forth from him." After hearing it, he began worshipping Allāh taʿālā to acquire that wisdom but the doors of wisdom were not opened to him. When a distinguished scholar heard about this person, he remarked: "He did the worship to acquire wisdom and not for Allāh's sake." (This is why Allāh taʿālā did not cause the fountains of wisdom to flow from him).

The above Hadīth means that if a person is sincere, Allāh *taʿālā* sends down wisdom in his heart and the person then utters it. Allāh *taʿālā* sends this wisdom to some people and does not send it to many others. Sending it and not sending it is in Allāh's control and not dependent on the worship.

Now listen to another point! To relate the statements of the pious elders with an impure intention and for worldly gain falls under the same ruling.

Hadrat Rūmī *rahimahullāh* said:

> A wretched person steals the words and statements of the dervishes so that he can sway and manipulate the ignorant ones through his mesmerising words.

Note: When a person relates the statements of the pious elders, he should do it for his own good and his own practice; and not to sway other people towards him. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

A sincere and genuine person is conferred with position and esteem

قال بعض العارفين قلما يكون صادق متمسك بعروة الإخلاص ذو قلب عامر إلا ويرزق الجاه وقبول الخلق حتى قال بعضهم أريد الجاه وإقبال الخلق لا لأبلغ نفسي حظها من الهوى حتى لا أبالي أقبلوا أم أدبروا، بل لكون قبول الخلق علامة لصحة الحال.

A Sufi said:

A genuinely devoted person who holds on firmly to ikhlāṣ and his heart is filled with Allāh's love is most certainly conferred with high rank and popularity among people. In fact, someone said: I want high rank and popularity among people not to satisfy the desires of my self – because I am not bothered if people come to me or discard me – but so that popularity among people may be an indication of the correctness of my condition [in the sight of Allāh taʿālā].

Honesty and sincerity are unique attributes:

روي عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أن عبدا لو أطاع الله من وراء سبعين حجابا لأظهر الله له ذلك على ألسنة الناس وكذلك المعصية. وروي أن الله أوحى إلى موسى عليه السلام قُل لبني إسرائيل يخفون لي أعمالهم وعلى أن أظهرها.[١]

It is related from Rasūlullāh ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam that if a servant obeys Allāh taʿālā from behind

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[1] التفسير الكبير للرازي، سورة البقرة، آية ٧٢.

70 veils, Allāh taʿālā will most certainly expose that good deed to the people. The same applies to disobedience.

It is related that Allāh taʿālā sent revelation to Hadrat Mūsā ʿalayhis salām saying: Say to the Banī Isrāʾīl to conceal their deeds for My sake, and I take it upon Myself to expose them.

Glory to Allāh! Look at how ikhlās is valued by Allāh *taʿālā*. We do not know what ikhlās is, yet we want to reach the high ranks which are received for ikhlās.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with the attributes of honesty and sincerity. May He confer us its fruits in this world as well. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

A statement of kufr after having īmān

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّۢ بِالْإِيْمَانِ

Whoever rejects Allāh after having brought faith – except him who is forced while his heart is at rest in his faith.[1]

The above verse explains the punishment for apostasy. However, there is an exception to this rule where a person is compelled into apostasy. The circumstances behind the revelation of this verse as mentioned in *Tafsīr Mazharī* reads as follows:

Hadrat Ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that this verse was revealed with reference to Hadrat ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. The polytheists had captured him, his father, Hadrat Yāsir *radiyallāhu*

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 106.

ʿanhu, his mother, Hadrat Sumayyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā*, and also Hadrat Suhayb, Hadrat Bilāl, Hadrat Khubayb and Hadrat Sālim *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. All of them were put through severe trials and tribulations. Hadrat Sumayyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* was tied between two camels and she was pierced in her private part with a spear. This resulted in her martyrdom. Her husband, Hadrat Yāsir *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, was also killed. These two are the first martyrs in Islam. As for Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, he was compelled by the polytheists and he said – verbally – whatever they demanded.

Hadrat Qatādah relates that the Banū Mughīrah captured Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and suspended him in the Maymūn well. They demanded that he must reject Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He did as they demanded while his heart abhorred this totally. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was then informed that Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* has become a kāfir. He said: ʿAmmār is filled with īmān which is flowing in his blood and entire body.

Subsequently, Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* came crying to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He asked him: "What is the matter?" He replied: "O Rasūlullāh! Something terrible has happened. I spoke bad of you while I spoke good of their gods." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: "What was the condition of your heart at that time?" He replied: "My heart was fully at rest with īmān at that time." Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* personally wiped off the tears from his eyes and said: "If the polytheists try to do this again to you, you must say the same thing (in order to save your life)." The above verse was revealed in reference to this incident.

Qā<u>d</u>ī Bay<u>d</u>āwī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes:

قلت وهو دليل على جواز التكلم بالكفر عند الإكراه وإن كان الأفضل أن يجتنب عنه إعزازا للدين كما فعله أبواه.

This proves the permissibility of uttering a statement of kufr under compulsion even though it is better to abstain from it for the sake of the honour of Islam, as was done by his parents.

It is preferable for a person who is under compulsion not to utter words of kufr. However, the author of *Mirqāt* states that if the death of a person would cause weakness to Islam, e.g. a scholar or a brave warrior, then it is better for such persons to utter the words of kufr. This, notwithstanding the fact that it is permissible for them to desist from uttering them. This is because the person is confronted with two tribulations, one is to verbally utter the words of kufr and the other is to be killed if he refuses to utter them. Since the death of such a person will cause weakness to Islam, his utterance of kufr will be accommodated after all this is the lesser of the two evils. Also, there is permissibility for it in the Sharī'at.

The following <u>H</u>adīth is quoted in *Mishkāt Sharīf*:

عن معاذ رضي الله عنه قال أوصاني رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعشر كلمات قال لا تشرك بالله شيئا وإن قتلت وحرقت.[١]

<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Mu'ādh ra<u>d</u>iyallāhu 'anhu narrates: Rasūlullāh <u>s</u>allallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam advised me with ten

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٣٦، ص ٣٩٢، حديث ٢٢٠٧٥.

things. (One of them was): Do not ascribe anything with Allāh even if you are killed and burnt.

An explanation of this Hadīth is quoted from *Mirqāt*:

قال ابن حجر شرط للمبالغة باعتبار الأكمل من صبر المكره على الكفر على ما هدد به، وهذا في من لم يحصل بموته وهن الإسلام وإلا كعالم وشجاع يحصل بموته ذلك، فالأولى له أن يأتي بما أكره عليه ولا يصبر على ما هدد به رعاية لأخفّ المفسدتَين، وأما باعتبار أصل الجواز فيجوز له أن يتلفظ وأن يفعل ما يقتضي الكفر كسب الإسلام وسجود الصنم إذا هدد ولو بنحو ضرب شديد أو أخذ مال له وقع وقع كما أفاد ذلك قوله تعالى: مَنْ كَفَرَ بِاللّٰهِ مِنْۢ بَعْدِ إِيْمَانِهِ إِلَّا مَنْ أُكْرِهَ وَقَلْبُهُ مُطْمَئِنٌّۢ بِالْإِيْمَانِ

Hāfiz Ibn Hajar rahimahullāh says that the precondition (even if you are killed and burnt) is hyperbolic. The one who is threatened to utter a statement of kufr must remain firm and abstain from uttering it. This is the better and preferred option. However, this ruling does not apply to all. Rather, it is for the person whose death will not cause any weakness to Islam. As for a scholar and brave warrior whose death can cause weakness to Islam, it is better for him to do what he is compelled to do and not to exercise patience over the threats which are made to him. This is in consideration to the lesser of the two harms. As for the actual ruling of permissibility, it is permissible for him to utter and do what entails kufr, e.g. uttering vulgar words against Islam or prostrating before an idol if he is threatened even if it is by severe beating or taking away his wealth. This is gauged from

the words of Allāh: "Whoever rejects Allāh after having brought faith – except him who is forced while his heart is at rest in his faith."[1]

Qādī Baydāwī *rahimahullāh* explains the words "while his heart is at rest in his faith" as follows:

أي ساكن به لم يتغير عقيدته

His heart is at rest with his īmān, and his belief [or creed] has not changed.

In other words, no doubts and misgivings are troubling him. As was the condition of Hadrat ʿAmmār *radiyallāhu ʿanhu.* Bearing in mind the condition of his heart, the words of kufr which he uttered out of compulsion were pardoned. The hypocrites had kufr in their hearts. Based on this, their verbal utterance of the kalimah was not taken into consideration and they were labelled as kāfirs.

One point which must be borne in mind is that the above-quoted verse was revealed for circumstances of absolute necessity. A lot of importance is attached to this verse. Just look at the extent of Allāh's mercy and compassion on man's weakness. The ease provided by the Sharīʿat is clearly visible from it. I wrote on this subject because of a current need.[2]

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 106.

[2] The reason for writing on this subject is that when there were certain conflicts between Muslims and Hindus, the non-Muslims wanted to impose on Muslims to utter words of kufr. Some Muslims uttered the words and an ʿālim labelled them as apostates. Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* wrote this article with a view to rectifying the situation. However, for some reason or the other, he did not send the article to the ʿālim. Nonetheless, the Muslim

The Sharī'at is the most superior and the easiest

The Sharīʿat is the easiest and the most superior. This is because all Islamic teachings – whether orders or prohibitions, acts of worship or ethics – are from Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the beauty of the injunctions of the Sharīʿat is both Sharʿī and rational. And the believers – just as they are people of īmān, they are also people of intelligence and intellects. If a person discards the injunctions of Islam without thinking bad of them, he is out of Dīn and has lost his intelligence as well.

Obedience, kindness, maintaining ties of kinship, truthfulness and honesty are accepted as good characteristics by all people of intelligence. In like manner, speaking lies, oppression, severing family ties and enmity are accepted as evils by all intelligent people and by every religion.

Take speaking lies as an example. It is considered bad in every religion and by every person. Allāh *taʿālā* says in the Qur'ān:

لَعْنَةُ اللهِ عَلَى الْكَاذِبِيْنَ

Allāh's curse be on the liars.[1]

On the other hand, honesty is praiseworthy in all religions, and an honest person is lauded for his honesty. If any nation discards honesty it will become worthless. After all, honesty and purity have been the distinguishing qualities of the righteous.

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community received clarity on this issue. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire the Muslims to read these rulings so that they can gauge and appreciate the expansiveness and perfection of Islam. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 61.

Based on this, oppression is an evil which is unanimously considered to be an evil. An oppressor is disliked and castigated by all religions and all people of intelligence; and an oppressed person is worthy of mercy by everyone. If everyone commits oppression, the destruction and desolation of this world will be inevitable. Its opposite is justice. The existence of this world depends on it. If all the people of the world discard justice and no longer possess this quality, the destruction and desolation of the world will be unavoidable.

Maintaining ties of kinship and having the quality of compassion are liked by Allāh *taʿālā*. These are desirable qualities in the eyes of all the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, people of all religions, and men of intelligence. The existence of the human race depends on these qualities.

Kindness towards idolaters

The following narration is quoted in *as-Siyar al-Kabīr*:

باب صلة المشرك: عن ابن مروان الخزاعي قال قلت لمجاهد رجل من أهل الشرك بيني وبينه قرابة ولي عليه مال أدعه، قال نعم وصله. وبه نأخذ. فنقول لا بأس بأن يصل المسلم الرجل المشرك قريبا أو بعيدا محاربا كان أو ذميا لحديث سلمة بن الأكوع قال صليت الصبح مع النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم فوجدت مس كف بين كتفي فالتفت فإذا هو رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم، فقال أهل أنت واهب لي ابنة أم قرفة، قلت نعم فوهبت له، فبعث بها إلى خاله حزن ابن أبي وهب وهو مشرك وهي مشركة.

وبعث رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم خمس مأة دينارا إلى مكة حين قحطوا، وأمر بدفع ذلك إلى أبي سفيان بن حرب وصفوان بن أمية ليفرق على فقراء أهل مكة، فقبل ذلك أبو سفيان وأبى صفوان، وقال ما يريد محمد بهذا إلا أن يخدع شبانها لأن صلة الرحم عند كل عاقل وفي كل دين وإهداء إلى الغير من مكارم الأخلاق، وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم بعثت لأتمم مكارم الأخلاق.[1]

The chapter on maintaining ties with an idolater:

Ibn Marwān Khuzā'ī relates: I said to Mujāhid: "I have a tie of kinship with an idolater and he owes me a debt. Do you think I should waive the debt?" He replied: "Yes, and maintain ties with him." (Imām Muhammad rahimahullāh said): This is what we practise. We say: There is nothing wrong in a Muslim maintaining ties of kinship with an idolater irrespective of whether he is a near or distant relative, one who is at war with the Islamic state or under the protection of the Islamic state. This is because a Hadīth of Salamah ibn al-Akwa' radiyallāhu 'anhu states in a Hadīth: I performed the fajr salāh with Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. I felt as if someone placed a hand on my shoulder. When I turned around, I saw that it was Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam. He said: "Are you prepared to give over the daughter of Umm Qarfah?" I replied: "Yes." I give her over to him. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam then sent her to his maternal uncle, Huzn ibn Abī Wahb, who was an idolater, and this girl was an idolatress.

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[1] سير كبير للإمام محمد.

Similarly, Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam sent 500 dīnārs to the people of Makkah when they were experiencing a drought. He ordered that the money be handed over to Abū Sufyān ibn Harb and Safwān ibn Umayyah so that they may distribute it among the poor of Makkah. Abū Sufyān accepted the money but Safwān refused it. The latter said: "Muhammad's sole objective is to delude and deceive our youth." This act of kindness [on the part of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam] was because the maintaining of family ties is a praiseworthy quality in the sight of every intelligent person and in every religion. Furthermore, to give a gift to others is from among the noble characteristics. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: I have been commissioned for the perfection of noble characteristics.

Balance and moderation in Islam

I say: Spending and feeding in this manner is from among the noble characteristics and qualities. Another beauty and excellence of Islamic teachings is that an oppressed person has been permitted to exact an equal revenge from his oppressor. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَالَّذِيْنَ اِذَا اَصَابَهُمُ الْبَغْيُ هُمْ يَنْتَصِرُوْنَ

Those whom, when there is an attack against them, they retaliate.[1]

Immediately thereafter Allāh *taʿālā* provides a general principle:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 39.

وَجَزَآؤُ سَيِّئَةٍ سَيِّئَةٌ مِّثْلُهَا، فَمَنْ عَفَا وَاَصْلَحَ فَاَجْرُهُ عَلَى اللهِ، اِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الظّٰلِمِيْنَ.

The retaliation for an evil is an evil like it. Then whoever pardons and reconciles, his reward lies with Allāh. Surely He does not like the sinners.[1]

Understand well that the rule of "the retaliation for an evil is an evil like it" does not apply in every situation. Rather, it can only be meted out where the action is not abhorred in itself and is not prohibited by the Sharīʿat. If the action is abhorred by the Sharīʿat, it cannot be committed in retaliation. For example, a person stole Rs. 10.00 from someone's pocket or broke his tooth, Rs. 10.00 can be paid back as compensation or the other person's tooth can be broken. But if, for example, a person committed adultery, it will not be permissible to commit adultery in retaliation because adultery is haram and abhorred by the Sharīʿat.

Pardoning is praiseworthy

You should understand this point as well: Retaliation for an evil with an evil like it is only permissible. Allāh *taʿālā* permitted it in the light of human emotions. Apart from this, it is much better and praiseworthy to pardon and forgive. Allāh *taʿālā* encourages us towards pardon and forgiveness as follows:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 40.

وَلَمَنِ انْتَصَرَ بَعْدَ ظُلْمِهِ فَاُولٰئِكَ مَا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ سَبِيْلٍ. اِنَّمَا السَّبِيْلُ عَلَى الَّذِيْنَ يَظْلِمُوْنَ النَّاسَ وَيَبْغُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ بِغَيْرِ الْحَقِّ، اُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ اَلِيْمٌ. وَلَمَنْ صَبَرَ وَغَفَرَ اِنَّ ذٰلِكَ لَمِنْ عَزْمِ الْاُمُوْرِ.

Whoever retaliates after being oppressed, then on such too there is no reproach. Reproach is only against those who oppress people and cause corruption in the land without justification. For such people is a painful punishment. However, whoever endures with fortitude and forgives, surely these are acts of courage.[1]

In like manner, Allāh *taʿālā* encourages towards patience and pardon in another verse:

وَإِنْ عَاقَبْتُمْ فَعَاقِبُوْا بِمِثْلِ مَا عُوْقِبْتُمْ بِهِ ۖ وَلَئِنْ صَبَرْتُمْ لَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لِّلصّٰبِرِيْنَ. وَاصْبِرْ وَمَا صَبْرُكَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ وَلَا تَحْزَنْ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا تَكُ فِيْ ضَيْقٍ مِّمَّا يَمْكُرُوْنَ. إِنَّ اللهَ مَعَ الَّذِيْنَ اتَّقَوْا وَّالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مُّحْسِنُوْنَ.

If you take vengeance, take vengeance proportionate to the injury that has been done to you. But if you exercise patience, this is best for those who are patient. Be patient, then. Your patience is possible only by Allāh's help. Do not grieve over them nor be distressed by their scheming. Surely Allāh is with those who are righteous and those who do virtuous deeds.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* says in yet another place:

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[1] Sūrah ash-Shūrā, 42: 41-43.

[2] Sūrah an-Na<u>h</u>l, 16: 126-128.

وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلٰى أَلَّا تَعْدِلُوْا ۚ إِعْدِلُوْا ۗ هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوٰى ۖ وَاتَّقُوا اللّٰهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللّٰهَ خَبِيْرٌ ۢ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ.

O believers! Forever stand up for the sake of Allāh in order to testify for justice. Never abandon justice on account of enmity with any people. Establish justice. This is closest to piety. Continually fear Allāh. Allāh is fully aware of what you do.[1]

We learn from the above that an oppressed person can exact revenge but he cannot commit oppression for what was committed against him. If he does, he will be transgressing the limit.

The following is stated in *as-Siyar al-Kabīr*:

للمظلوم أن يدفع الظلم عن نفسه بما يقدر عليه، لكن ليس للمظلوم أن يظلم غيره.

An oppressed person may repulse the oppression committed against him according to what is within his power. However, he cannot commit oppression on someone else.

This is because transgressing the limit is not permitted even out of enmity. Just as this is impermissible on the masses in their mutual dealings, it is not permissible for a ruler to oppress his subjects. He will be accountable for whatever he does.

The limits of friendship and enmity

Whether it is friendship or enmity, Islam has laid down limits for each. When enmity transgresses its

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[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 8.

limits, it becomes bestiality. When the limits are not considered in enmity, it becomes oppression.

Just as all our other matters have become unprincipled and disorderly, enmity and friendship are no longer within their limits.

There are principles for enmity and friendship. If the principles of enmity are not upheld, life will become disastrous and people will experience "death" even before they die. This is common nowadays.

Enmity is most abhorrent. It does not allow man to remain on the limits. This is why Islam laid down limits for it.

It is most sad that people are succumbing unhesitatingly to the thing which both the Sharī'at and intellect unanimously consider to be detestable. Let alone the laity, even people of knowledge and understanding are caught up in this. It is difficult to say that they have no intelligence. However, we can certainly say that their selfish and carnal self has the better of them. Consequently, their knowledge and intelligence have been overpowered and left paralysed. The intellect is essential for knowledge to be fruitful. In like manner, the intellect remains incomplete and defective when it is not supported by good character. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm*:

فينبغي أن يكون فيمن توثر صحبته خمس خصال: أن يكون عاقلا حسن الخلق غير فاسق ولا مبتدع ولا حريص على الدنيا.

In order for a companionship to be effective, the person whose company you choose must have five qualities: (1) he must be intelligent, (2) he must have good sound character, (3) he must not be a flagrant sinner, (4) he

must not commit innovations in religion, (5) he must not hanker after this world.

أما العقل فهو رأس المال وهو الأصل فلا خير في صحبة الأحمق فإلى الوحشة والقطيعة ترجع عاقبتهما وإن طالت، كيف والأحمق قد يضرك وهو يريد نفعك وإعانتك من حيث لا يدري، وقيل مقاطعة الأحمق قربان إلى الله تعالى، وقال الثوري: النظر إلى وجه الأحمق خطيئة مكتوبة، ونعني بالعاقل الذي يفهم الأمور على ما هي عليه إما بنفسه أو إما إذا فهم.

Intelligence is one's capital wealth and the fundamental requirement. There is no good in the company of a foolish person. Their companionship will end in aversion and severance even if it is a very lengthy relationship. Why should this not be the case, after all, even if a foolish person wants to benefit and help you, he will cause you harm without even knowing it. It is said that severing ties from a foolish person is a means of gaining proximity to Allāh taʿālā. Hadrat Thaurī rahimahullāh said: "Looking at the face of a foolish person is a mistake which is recorded." By an intelligent person we are referring to the one who is able to understand and fathom matters as they ought to be understood either by himself or after they are explained to him.

وأما حسن الخلق فلا بد منه إذ رب عاقل يدرك الأشياء على ما هي عليه ولكن إذا غلبه غضب أو شهوة أو بخل أو جبن أطاع هواه وخالف ما هو المعلوم عنده لعجزه عن قهر صفاته وتقويم أخلاقه، فلا خير في صحبته.

Good character is essential because it may well be that an intelligent person perceives things as they are, but when he is overcome by anger, passion, miserliness or cowardice, he follows his desires and acts against what he knows. This is because he is unable to overpower those evil qualities and to set right his character. Obviously there is no good in his companionship.

وأما الفاسق المصر على الفسق فلا فائدة في صحبته لأن من يخاف الله لا يصر على كبيرة، ومن لا يخاف الله لا يومن غائلته لا يوثق بصداقته بل يتغير بتغير الأغراض.

As for a flagrant sinner who persists in sin, there is no benefit in his company because a person who fears Allāh taʿālā will not persist in committing major sins. As for the one who has no fear of Allāh taʿālā – how can one feel safe from his plotting and scheming ways? One cannot even rely on his friendship because it will constantly change with the changing of objectives.

وأما المبتدع فصحبته خطر لسراية البدعة وتعدي شؤمها إليه.

As for an innovator in religion, his company is dangerous because innovation has encompassed him and its ill effects will be transferred to the other.

وأما الحريص على الدنيا فصحبته سم قاتل لأن الطباع مجبولة على التشبه والإقتداء بل الطبع يسرق من الطبع من حيث لا يدري صاحبه.[1]

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٢، ص ١٧٢-١٧٤.

The company of a person who hankers after the world is a fatal poison because temperaments inevitably emulate and follow others. In fact, one temperament steals from another without the person even realizing it.

At this point what I want to demonstrate to you is that the general belief that the intellect alone is enough for the rectification of all matters is incorrect. From the above explanation of Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* we learn that the company of an intelligent person is certainly beneficial, but at the same time it is essential for an intelligent person to have good character and mannerisms. If this will not be the case, the poor intelligence will be a prisoner in the hands of the carnal self.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* labels the company of a foolish person to be harmful. As for an intelligent person, he says that his company will be useful provided he also has good character. The reason he gives is that many intelligent people understand matters correctly, but when they are overcome by anger, passion, cowardice, love for this world, etc. they commit these things. Although they consider them to be contradictory to their knowledge, they are unable to rectify their evil qualities and traits; and they cannot remove them.

From here we learn the definition of an intelligent person, viz. he understands the reality of things as they are. The definition of a foolish person is also learnt, viz. he just cannot understand the reality of things. Thus, if the company of an intelligent person without good character is not enough, how can the company of a foolish person who cannot understand the reality of things be of any benefit!? How can such a person be ever relied upon?

Imām Ghazzālī's explanation of companionship can be applied to the administration and organization of things. Here too, mere intelligence is not enough. Rather, the person has to possess good character as well. This is because without it, even intelligence cannot be relied upon. In such a situation, a person's knowledge changes with regard to even the most important matters. Consequently, he considers the truth to be falsehood, and falsehood to be the truth. He acts against what he knows and what he understood, and resorts to his own choice and preference.

The story of Rustam

It will not be out of place if I relate a story of Rustam. The story is long but I will condense it. The ambassadors of Islam first explained to him in a soft and lenient manner. Their clear and straightforward conversation did not have any effect on him. Instead, he said to them: "We will go to war tomorrow." The two armies began preparations for battle. However, that very night, Rustam saw a dream in which two angels descended from the heavens, took all the quivers of the soldiers, sealed them and took them to the heavens. Rustam was grief-stricken by this dream. Early the next morning he called for his confidants and close associates and said: "Allāh is warning us repeatedly and explaining to us but we are not taking heed." He then put on two armours, a helmet, attached all his weapons to himself, mounted his horse and said: "We will trample them tomorrow." One of his companions said: "Inshā Allāh" – if Allāh wills.

Rustam said: “We will trample them even if He does not will it.”[1]

What I want to draw your attention to is that although Rustam was an intelligent man and had concluded through strong indications that divine help is not with them, he was still a rejecter. No sooner his people prompted him to fight, he got ready to do it. This shows that the intellect alone is not enough for success. Rather, it also needs rectification of character. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā H̲abīb ar-Rah̲mān S̲āh̲ib ʿUthmānī *rah̲imahullāh* wrote an excellent piece in *Ishāʿat Islam*. I feel it ought to be quoted verbatim. He writes:

> We are surprised at Rustam’s stand because he was convinced that Islam was the true religion and that the Muslims will be victorious. Why, then, did he make such a statement [We will trample them tomorrow]? The historians explain that this was in his heart and he had expressed it on several occasions to his confidants. However, in order to stir the courage of the Persians and to ensure that they are ready to fight, he displayed his bravery. However, I am of a completely different view. Rustam was certainly convinced of Islam’s truthfulness, that fighting the Muslims would go in vain, and that they will certainly be victorious. Nonetheless, he was overcome by wretchedness. A person has knowledge of a certain thing but his knowledge changes when he is in a state of anger. He considers the truth to be

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[1] *Ishāʿat Islam*, p. 149.

falsehood and vice versa. Consequently, he acts according to what his choice and preference demand.[1]

[1] *Ishāʿat Islam*, p. 149.

If people understand what is said, they will benefit. A Maulānā came to me and joined the assembly. He was an intelligent man. When he returned [to his place], people asked him about his stay (because people feel that I am very strict). He replied sarcastically: “Yes, he hit me a lot.” When they insisted that he speaks the truth, he quoted my words and statements verbatim. The people were quite impressed. He also said to them: “There is no strictness with him. Even if it appears that he is angry at someone, the person is happy with it and does not feel offended.”

Nowadays people are harsh towards each other and they commit many wrongs and excesses against one and another. Thus, when they come here, they see their own harshness. The fact is that they have no faith in anyone. This is why they judge others according to their own traits and think them to be just like them. I see people having faith in salāh, in the masjid and so on. But no sooner they see someone having faith in a saint, their faithlessness comes into action and they develop various types of objections against him without any valid grounds. They are merely proving their faithlessness. The reason for this is that they see everyone in one condition, and then when they see someone who has been blessed by Allāh’s grace and is not like them, they – due to their faithlessness – reject him, oppose him and even go to the extent of being fanatical against him. The fact of the matter is that the sickness of rejection has developed in their heart. If this internal sickness was not prevalent, the spiritual doctors would not have spoken about it. The elders explain that a person must go and meet as many saints as he can in his

quest for a spiritual mentor. However, he must never reject anyone nor find fault with him. At the same time, he must not pledge bayʿat to anyone without thinking about it carefully. We learn from this that when searching for a spiritual mentor, the absence of rejection and fault-finding are prerequisites.

The reason for failure nowadays is that the sickness of rejection has become prevalent. Sayyid ʿAbd al-Malik Harbūnī asked Sayyid Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* about having doubts. He said: "The person who is in doubt cannot be successful." If this is the case with doubts, what can be said about rejection!?

A doubt is always with regard to a two-angled matter; where there are two possibilities. A person is sometimes inclined to one side and sometimes to the other side. I say that if you feel that a certain person could be a saint or couldn't be, then look at both possibilities equally and sit in his presence with a clear mind. If you sit there with rejection and fault-finding, you have already decided on one possibility for yourself. How, then, can it be called a doubt? It is most certainly rejection.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality expounded by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

The deplorable condition of the laity

The condition of the masses today is that they have no affinity whatsoever with Dīn. They remain immersed in the world by day and night. But when they sit in their huqqah-smoking assemblies, they start passing decisions about the auliyā' of Allāh *taʿālā*, give their opinions about senior saints, and find fault with the erudite ʿulamā'. This is a most evil occupation. When the observe the high rank of the auliyā' in Allāh's

court and smell the stink of their rejection and fault-finding, they will really regret their actions.

The ruling of the Sharīʿat is that we have to have noble thoughts about even the general body of Muslims. And when we see good pointers in a certain Muslim, how much more necessary it becomes to have noble thoughts about him! The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that we cannot label any person as a walī with certainty because this is a special relationship between a servant and Allāh *taʿālā*. Nonetheless, it becomes wājib to be respectful and courteous towards the person who apparently has the qualities of the auliyā'. It is not permissible to harm him in any way. For example, to reject him out of obstinacy or jealousy because this is also a cause of harm. The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* is not saying this from his own side, rather there is a Hadīth Qudsī which states:

مَنْ عَادٰى لِيْ وَلِيًّا فَقَدْ اٰذَنْتُهُ بِالْحَرْبِ

I declare war on the person who is antagonistic towards My friend.

We learn from this that it is no trivial matter to cause harm to a walī. After all, the one causing the harm is fighting against Allāh *taʿālā*. How, then, can he experience any good!?

How to identify a walī

How are we to identify a walī? The answer is that we are obliged to look at the external. When we see the qualities of the auliyā' in a person, we will desist from causing any harm to him. Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* said:

> When you see the garments of a dervish on
> a person, consider him to be a dervish,

> and believe that he is a pious man. If you are not aware of his internal condition, so what? What is the need for a chief of police to be inside a house?

People display friendship outwardly while they conceal enmity. However, they are quite sharp in convincing people into thinking that they are their friends and not their enemies. I say, very well, you can convince me, but how will you convince Allāh *taʿālā* when there is something else in your heart? What arrangements have you made for the time when you are presented before Him? The sickness of rejection has become so firmly embedded that people refuse to give it up. Some people want to give it up but because it is so deeply embedded, they cannot uproot it and they are destroyed by it.

One type of faith in a person is rational while the other is emulative. Emulative faith is when you see a few people reverting to a certain personality, so you emulate them as well. Rational faith is that you do not something just because you see others doing it. Rather, you do it after having investigated the matter and thought about it carefully. Rational faith is of fundamental importance. Following ones faith is not faith in itself, it is to do with the heart. You can follow another in external actions, but not in internal actions.

An admonitory incident

An ʿālim went to a saint. That night, the thought came to his mind that he surpasses the saint in one aspect [knowledge]. The very next day the saint said to him: "You must go to such and such saint who lives in such and such place." He proceeded to that saint, but due to his habit, the same thought crossed his mind.

The second saint also asked him to go to another saint. On going to the third saint, he was about to have the same thought about him when he experienced a certain condition on account of which he became unconscious. While in this condition he witnesses the day of Resurrection. There is a burning oven in which rats are thrown. While this is carrying on, his hand is also held and he is about to be thrown in that oven. He then sees that saint who says: "Leave him, he is our man." The 'ālim wakes up from his unconscious state and comes to his senses. The saint says to him: "Do you know what that was? The oven was the Hell-fire. Those who reject the auliyā' were in the form of the rats. If you did not come to me, you would have been cast into it as well."

This is why the seniors of the past abhorred rejecting the auliyā'. They used to punish those who did that and expelled them from their company. Ever since the seniors stopped speaking out against this practice, rejection of the auliyā' increased. The rejecters have no proof for their rejection. They neither have knowledge nor practice. They reject merely out of the desires of the carnal self. There was a poet who used to criticize the pious people a lot. Some people said to Khwājah S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*: "That poet is going beyond the limits. You too should say something." Khwājah S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* replied: "Very well." He then composed some lines of poetry against the poet who then came to his senses. He wrote to Khwājah S̲āh̲ib: "Khwājah S̲āh̲ib, please stop. I too will stop."

The easiest path is that of having faith and confidence [in the auliyā']. No sooner a person has faith in a saint and is sincere towards him, his blessings start to flow towards him. Irrespective of whether such a person is awake or asleep, the saint's blessings flow to him all

the time. People certainly strive a bit but they do not adopt the fundamental thing, i.e. they do not choose sincerity and devotion.

Doubts and misgivings, rejection and objection are the qualities of the unbelievers and hypocrites. A believer’s heart ought to be filled with īmān and affirmation. There is no room for doubts and misgivings in it. Where Allāh *taʿālā* describes the īmān and good deeds of the believers, He adds that they do not have doubts and misgivings. Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah al-Hujurāt:

اِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهٖ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَرْتَابُوْا

The true believers are they who believe in Allāh and in His Messenger, and thereafter have no doubt.[1]

It cannot happen that you sit with sincerity in the assembly of a practising ʿālim and you do not receive Dīn and īmān. Those who reject and raise objections do not come with sincerity, and so, they do not benefit. When they do not derive benefit, they reject and object. Allāh *taʿālā* describes the condition of the unbelievers – when they could not acquire guidance from the Qur’ān due to their ineptitude, they say: This is an ancient fabrication.

وَاِذْ لَمْ يَهْتَدُوْا بِهٖ فَسَيَقُوْلُوْنَ هٰذَآ اِفْكٌ قَدِيْمٌ

Since they have not been guided by it, they will say: “This is a very old lie.”[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 15.

[2] Sūrah al-Ahqāf, 46: 11.

As for the believers, they benefited from the Qur'ān and took benefit from it. Their condition is described as follows:

وَإِذَا سَمِعُوْا مَآ أُنْزِلَ إِلَى الرَّسُوْلِ تَرٰى أَعْيُنَهُمْ تَفِيْضُ مِنَ الدَّمْعِ مِمَّا عَرَفُوْا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۚ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَآ اٰمَنَّا فَاكْتُبْنَا مَعَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ. وَمَا لَنَا لَا نُؤْمِنُ بِاللّٰهِ وَمَا جَآءَنَا مِنَ الْحَقِّ ۙ وَنَطْمَعُ أَنْ يُّدْخِلَنَا رَبُّنَا مَعَ الْقَوْمِ الصّٰلِحِيْنَ.

When they hear that which was revealed to the Messenger, you see their eyes overflowing with tears because they have recognized the truth. They say: "O our Lord! We have believed. Include us, then with those who accept. Why should we not have conviction in Allāh and that which has reached us of the truth? [Why should we not] hope that our Lord admits us with the righteous?"[1]

Īmān is a great treasure

If a person goes with sincerity to the pious elders, he will never leave empty-handed. I say: Do not bother whether you experience spiritual conditions or not; īmān, conviction and affirmation are themselves very great qualities. These are the treasures which a person gets from the saints. A sincere person derives benefit from the very first day even though he may not perceive it. Depending on the capability of each person, the effects of the benefit are manifested very quickly on some people while after some time on others.

All that a person really has to do is to develop a genuine intention. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "I know that some of the

[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 83.

people who sit here have no knowledge whatsoever about the world and its happenings.” (The writer, Maulānā ʿAbd ar-Rah̲mān S̲āh̲ib Jāmī says that our mentor, H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*, was from among such people).

It is impossible for a person to come with a genuine intention and to leave empty-handed. People commonly say: “He came empty-handed and left empty-handed.” This means that if he comes without sincerity he will leave without blessings. As for the person who comes with a genuine intention, he does not leave empty-handed.

Whatever I am saying at present entails rules and regulations of the T̲arīqat. It is necessary to know them and to practise on them.

Spiritual proximity with the saints is of essence

Nowadays people have lost their focus to such an extent that they consider physical proximity to be of essence. They feel that they have to be around their shaykh all the time. They do not consider faith and confidence in him to be necessary. Whereas faith is of essence in this path. If a person remains with a shaykh all the time without having any faith in him he will not benefit in any way. In fact, it will be harmful to him. This is similar to a person who is not a saint but claims to be a saint. The seniors refer to such a person as a highway robber. In other words, he leads astray those who come to him. You also get some murīds who want to kill the path of the shaykh by wanting to remain around him even during his special times [of solitude]. They do not allow him to be in solitude with Allāh *taʿālā*. They actually want to lower the shaykh from his lofty position and bring him down to their level of heedlessness. I say: The company of a

shaykh is undoubtedly effective, but there is a limit to companionship, viz. you must not disturb the shaykh in his times of solitude.

Spiritual proximity, not physical proximity, is of essence. Many people remain in the company of the saints for years, but because they have no sincerity and faith, they do not benefit in any way. There was a person who remained with a saint for many years. He occupied himself in many spiritual practices, he would engage in loud dhikr for 2-3 hours at a time. People considered him to be a great walī. A person arrived after the death of the saint while the person's condition had changed for the worse. When people asked him how come his condition changed while he had spent so many years in the company of the saint, he said: "Even for one day I did not stay with the saint for Allāh's sake."

Note: We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. What an admonitory incident! Man should constantly fear because he does not know when his condition can change. We must always make duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* to keep us on guidance irrespective of whether we are in Makkah, Madīnah or in the company of a saint. (compiler)

Let me add one additional point. Listen attentively. It is an admonitory point. When a person rejects a saint of Allāh *taʿālā* and causes him harm, then in most cases, Allāh *taʿālā* does not seize the person while the saint is alive because the latter will seek pardon for him. The auliyā' are soft-hearted by nature. If they pardon the person, the story will be over. On the other hand, Allāh *taʿālā* has willed to punish the person because he was ill-mannered towards a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* seizes him after the saint's demise and punishes him.

SINCERITY AND EMULATION

A person by the name of ʿAlī went to a saint. The saint said to him: "Go away from here." He left and on the way he thought to himself: "Since I have been expelled from there, what is the benefit of living? It will be better for me to be buried in the ground." The saint came to know of this through kashf (exposition) and sent someone to bring him back. The saint then included him among his close associates (khawās). This is why he came to be known as ʿAlī al-Khawwās.

Did you see! The man passed the test because he was not offended by his expulsion. Rather, he was grieved and lamented over the fact that he was expelled from such a place. He felt he was not worthy of living any longer and it would be better if he died. This desire was based on extreme grief and intense faith and confidence in the saint. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* cast the thought in the saint's mind that the man is sincere, he should be called back and included among his close associates. This is what the saint did. Listen! Proximity in Allāh's path is not acquired with the body alone, but with sincerity. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

لَنْ يَّنَالَ اللّٰهَ لُحُوْمُهَا وَلاَ دِمَآؤُهَا وَلٰكِنْ يَّنَالُهُ التَّقْوٰى مِنْكُمْ

Neither their meat nor their blood reaches Allāh. Rather, it is the piety of your hearts that reaches Him.[1]

A Hadīth states that there are two drops which are accepted even before they fall to the ground. One is the tear-drop which is shed for Allāh *taʿālā*. The other is the drop of blood which is shed in Allāh's cause.

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 37.

H̱aḏrat Ibn ʿAbbās *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* explains the word taqwā as ikhlās̱ (sincerity). After pondering over it we come to the conclusion that it refers to ikhlās̱. The seniors of Dīn say that the difference between the past and present peoples is because of ikhlās̱. It may well happen that a person does a lot of good deeds but they do not reach Allāh *taʿālā*. On the other hand, a person may do very few deeds but they reach Allāh *taʿālā* on account of his sincerity. Actions are accepted on the basis of sincerity.

A sign of sincerity

A man was going to the masjid for s̱alāh. He met a person who had completed his s̱alāh and was coming from the masjid. The first one asked him: “Is the congregation over?” He replied: “Yes.” When he heard this, the man exhaled deeply by saying; “Aah.” [to show his disappointment]. The man said to him: “You can take the reward of my s̱alāh and give me your “aah”. What he meant by this was that the reward which he received for the grief and sadness which he experienced at missing the congregation was far better than the reward which the man received for performing the s̱alāh with congregation because he did not have that level of sincerity.

I say: To come and go, to sit and observe, etc. are very easy actions. It is also easy to make an item as tabarruk – to obtain blessings. However, it is extremely difficult to do an action with sincerity. If there is no sincerity, nothing is achieved.

Some guests arrived at the place of H̱aḏrat Maulānā Thānwī *raẖimahullāh* at an inopportune time when it was severely hot. I was present at the time. An outsider had come to live there with his wife and children. He proceeded to his house, asked his wife to

prepare some food immediately and to send it to the house of Hadrat Maulānā. The man then went to Hadrat Maulānā and said: "Hadrat, do not make any food arrangements for the guests. I have made arrangements at my house. The food for your guests will be sent to your house." Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* related this incident to us with much praise and said: "At that very moment I said to the man: 'May Allāh reward you well.'"

I say: That man will be pardoned on the day of Resurrection on account of this deed – inshā Allāh. This was absolute and pure ikhlās. When there is ikhlās, a person understands whatever needs to be done. This is what Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* related to us in his assembly. The saints taught us Dīn in various ways. If they did not relate incidents and stories of this nature how would he have learnt about their lives? How would we have learnt the real meaning of sincerity?

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* once went to the king to intercede on behalf of someone. Some Sufis had committed a wrong and so the king stopped their stipends. The doorman prevented Shaykh Saʿdī from going forward. The king somehow came to know of his arrival. He hastened towards Shaykh Saʿdī and took him inside. The Shaykh said: "Leave me, I will sit in the same row as these slaves." Saying this, he went to sit down with them. The king said: "What an excellent thing! Even if you sit on my head and eyes, I will revel in pride because you are my beloved and I have faith in you."

I say: What if the Shaykh began arguing with the doorman and said to him: "I am such and such person, I will not listen to you." He probably would not have been received with such honour.

The reason for having a doorman

People have still not understood the reason for having a doorman. If the truth be told, a doorman is not there to only permit special people. Rather, he is there to protect against the enemies. A policeman who is on patrol does that to protect your life, wealth and honour against thieves and rogues. He is not there to stop special people; he is there to stop enemies. While he is on duty, then in the course of his duty he is there for everyone – friends and foes. In the same way, the doormen which the seniors of Dīn have are not to guard against the seekers and special associates. They are there for outsiders. However, he does not recognize everyone – he does not know who is special and who is not. This is why he stops everyone. If not, he will be considered to be wanting in his duties. It is the right of a doorman to stop a person on the slightest suspicion that the person is an outsider and a stranger. Once the master is informed the person will be treated as ordered by the master. If he is a special person, he will be accorded special treatment. The master will apologize because he did not know – as was the case in the above incident with Shaykh Saʿdī *raẖimahullāh*. The king accorded him special treatment and honoured him. It is possible that he reprimanded the doorman for not recognizing who had come. He must have informed the doorman that Shaykh Saʿdī was his shaykh and that he must not stop him in future.

Those who are put through the severest tests

A Ḫadīth states:

أشد الناس بلاء الأنبياء ثم الأمثل فالأمثل[1]

The severest tests and tribulations are given to the Prophets, followed by those who are closest to them, then those who are closest to them.

The further away a person is from Dīn, the lesser the hardships he will suffer. The more desire he has for Dīn, the severer the tests he will be put through.

Generally the enemies claim and say: “We are better because we are not suffering those calamities.” They do not understand anything. When a lover is put through trials and tribulations by his beloved, he does not even consider them to be trials and tribulations. His condition is expressing the following words of a poet:

> (O beloved)! May Allāh not allow the enemies to be killed by your sword. May the heads of friends remain in tact so that you could work your dagger on them.

Note: The following couplet of Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh* conveys a similar meaning. It was approved by Hadrat Maulānā Abrār al-Haq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* as well:

> When any calamity comes from a friend, it is not a calamity; it is munificence.

Do you know the reason for this test? It is to differentiate between the sincere and the insincere. The one who is not sincere will flee. In fact, people like him do not try to do good even after seeing the tests which the beloved and sincere ones go through. Only

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[1] صحيح البخاري، باب أشد الناس بلاء، ٣، كتاب المرض، ٧٥.

the one who is a true lover of Allāh *taʿālā* and is a genuine seeker will set foot on this path. In this way, the path of Allāh *taʿālā* will be purified of false claimants and impostors.

An ʿālim went to a Nawāb S̲āh̲ib. At night, he went out for some need. When he returned, the guard stopped him and asked: "Who are you?" He thought to himself: "If I were to use words like "poor", "insignificant", etc. to describe myself, he will probably send me off and refuse me entry." Therefore he immediately retorted: "I am the senior Maulānā S̲āh̲ib from Delhi." On hearing this, the guard humbled himself and thought that the Nawāb S̲āh̲ib must have said something about his special guests. Nevertheless, he was on guard, it was his job to check, and he was getting paid for this job. If he did not carry out his duty, he would not be eligible for a pay. Another point we learn is that it is the duty of newcomers to inform of their arrival.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

Those who strive in Our cause – We will certainly show them Our paths.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* preconditioned striving for guidance. A person has to make himself "small" in this path, he has to humble and submit himself; only then will he achieve something. There are certain procedures which he has to follow; if he does not, he will not achieve anything. Understand this well. After all, water only flows to a low-lying region.

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[1] Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt, 29: 69.

ʿAllāmah Ibn Qayyim *rahimahullāh* writes about the peace treaty of Hudaybiyah as follows:

The meaning of fath

The linguistic meaning of *fath* is to open something which is locked. The peace treaty which was made with the polytheists was a "locked" treaty until Allāh *taʿālā* referred to it as a *fath*. A major reason for this *fath* (victory) was that the polytheists had prevented Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* from the Kaʿbah. Outwardly this was a defeat and humiliation for the Muslims whereas in reality it was an honour and a victory for them. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* looked beyond the treaty and saw a major victory in it, and honour and help within it. This is why he accepted all the conditions which the polytheists had laid down notwithstanding the fact that most of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* could not stomach those conditions. However, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* knew the favourable conditions which were concealed behind the unfavourable ones. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَعَسٰى أَنْ تَكْرَهُوْا شَيْئًا وَّهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ

It is possible that you find a thing disagreeable while it may be better for you.[1]

This is why Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* agreed to the peace treaty.[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 216.

[2] *Zād al-Maʿād*, vol. 3, p. 310.

The *Būstān* contains the story of a person who used to repent at night but break it the next morning. He realized the reason for this after a very long time:

> Only if Allāh *taʿālā* confers us with repentance, it will remain intact. If not, our covenants and promises are weak.

If a person repents repeatedly and he does not succeed, then what is the reason for it? Repentance has two affiliations – one is with the person and the other is with Allāh *taʿālā*. When our repentance is coupled with Allāh's mercy, it remains intact. Once a person understands this, his recognition of Allāh *taʿālā* is acquired and he has achieved his objective. This was the secret behind the non-acceptance of his repentance. There was another reason for its non-acceptance, viz. in the beginning, he was proud of his actions, and this is what generally happens in the beginning. A person thinks to himself that if he wants, he can become pious on his own. Since he relies on his own will, the path becomes long. It is the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* that as long as a person applies his own will and choice, he does not reach his objective. Once he humbles and submits himself, the path is opened before him and Allāh *taʿālā* welcomes him.

An admonitory incident of a saint

A saint was proceeding to some place with his disciples. The king was sitting in his palace and observing him. He recognized who he was. When the saint neared the palace, the king lowered his rope-ladder and asked the saint to come up. When he came up, the king asked him: "How did you reach Allāh *taʿālā*?" He replied: "In the same way as I reached you." In other words, if I wanted to reach you, the guards of the palace would have stopped me. Then I

do not know how long it would take for the information to reach you. In fact, I do not know if the guards will even inform you of my arrival. But when you yourself called me, you lowered the rope-ladder and I came up to you.

Did you see! A person does not reach anywhere by his own choice. Actions do not have so much of power as to reach Allāh *taʿālā* on their own. It is only when Allāh *taʿālā* wills that he lowers the "rope-ladder". Do you know what Allāh's rope-ladder is? It is the Qur'ān. Countless people reached Allāh *taʿālā* through it. If you recite the Qur'ān with firm belief and you recite it from your heart, then you too can reach Allāh *taʿālā* through this rope-ladder.

There was a person who had been frequently going to H̲ad̲rat Niz̲ām ad-Dīn Auliyā' *rah̲imahullāh*. One day, he said to himself: "There is no doubt whatsoever that H̲ad̲rat is a walī. At the same time there is absolutely no doubt that I am coming here for so long but let alone reaching lofty stations of spirituality, I have not even been able to give up sins." H̲ad̲rat got knowledge of this through exposition or inspiration. From that very day, the man began giving up sins gradually until he said: "H̲ad̲rat has drawn me to himself in such a manner that even if I want to commit a sin I cannot do it."

This is something to understand and comprehend. You can allow your personal opinion, intellect and choice to interfere in everything, but it is contrary to obedience to give vent to your intellect and opinions, and to dispute with the Ahlullāh. Obedience is lost on account of this. You must therefore abandon your own choice and opinions in matters related to the Ahlullāh. After all, these personalities who reached Allāh *taʿālā* did so because they abandoned and discarded

disputes and arguments. They were obedient to the texts of Dīn. This is why they teach the same thing to those who frequent them. They instruct them to be obedient and to give up disputing and arguing. You can present your views everywhere else, but this place is different. Here you will achieve nothing from your personal views and argumentative attitude. These personalities themselves are not under their own choice and authority. There are times when they are even reprimanded with regard to their disciples.

An incident related to Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Ganj Murādābādī

Hadrat Maulānā Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was a senior saint of expositions and supernatural feats. He expelled a person from his company and personally led him out of the masjid by holding his hand. Then he also removed the man's belongings and placed them outside the masjid. The man went back into the masjid. Hadrat removed him several times but he did the same. Hadrat eventually left him and he remained in the masjid. When it was mealtime, Hadrat sent food for him but he refused to eat it. Hadrat went to him personally and requested him to eat. He replied: "I am not going to eat because it was due to this very food that you had expelled me." Hadrat tried to console him and convince him, and added: "Many worldly people come here, this is why I do this." The man said: "Religious people also come here, why don't you check properly." Hadrat pacified him and eventually convinced him to eat.

Did you see! One is occasionally reprimanded by Allāh *taʿālā* through a special servant of Allāh *taʿālā*.

An incident related to Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī

Listen to another similar incident:

Hadrat Maulānā Rashīd Ahmad Gangohī *rahimahullāh* was in his khānqāh. After performing tahajjud salāh he was occupied in dhikr. Suddenly he heard something which sounded like someone coming and going. Hadrat asked: "Who is there?" A man came forward and said: "Hadrat, it is me. I am extremely hungry." Hadrat got up immediately, went inside and brought some fruit and whatever else he could find. It was a considerable amount. He brought everything and presented it to the person who was overjoyed. From this, Hadrat must have realized that these things do happen [that people in the khānqāh get hungry at odd hours]. Subsequently, he made considerable arrangements so that no one gets hungry in the future.

The need to obliterate one's will

Obliterating one's will and one's choice are two essentials when in the company of the saints. A person will not succeed as long as he looks at his own good qualities. Action is a prerequisite but not a basis. The only basis is Allāh's grace. Spiritual striving and other similar activities are prerequisites, they are not bases. The only basis is Allāh's mercy and grace. If you consider spiritual striving the basis [for success], you will not succeed. If a person does not strive, he is like a person who performs salāh without wudū'. Wudū' is a prerequisite for salāh but it is outside salāh. After the wudū', the salāh comprises of many obligatory actions.

The gist is that ikhlās is of essence in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what reaches Allāh *taʿālā* and it is what is accepted by Him. When actions are accepted,

it is because they are accompanied by ikhlās. Actions are not considered in the least if they do not contain ikhlās.

The other point is that a person may present his personal view and opinion everywhere but not before the Ahlullāh. When he is in their presence, he must obliterate himself. He must not resort to his choice, intellect and intelligence against them. A poet says:

> There is no room for one's personal views and ideas in the creed of sulūk. Personal views and opinions are kufr in this creed.

The fundamental objective of going to the saints is to follow the texts [Qur'ān and Hadīth], and get freedom from the influences of the carnal self and Shaytān. These personalities have acquired freedom from these influences and made it obligatory on themselves to follow the texts. Thus, they teach the same thing to others. It is through this that a person can acquire proximity to Allāh *ta'ālā*. Following the texts includes following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

Thus, it is obligatory to follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as well. The Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* understood this text very well. Then look how they followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*! The world cannot produce an example like theirs. In this regard there are unique incidents in the Ahādīth. On one occasion, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu 'anhum* said: "O Rasūlullāh! If you order us, we will dive into

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[1] Sūrah Āl 'Imrān, 3: 31.

the ocean."[1] Glory to Allāh! Look at the level of emulation which the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* were blessed with!

Fundamental obedience is to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, the Allāh-fearing 'ulamā' and genuine Sufis are the deputies of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. These personalities follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in letter and spirit. They are the practical examples of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Thus, through Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it is necessary to obey them as well. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

Follow the way of the one who has turned to Me.[2]

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent reality has been explained by H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. (compiler)

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[1] صحيح مسلم، كتاب الجهاد، ٣٢، باب غزوة بدر، حديث ١٧٧٩.

[2] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

SINCERITY AND HYPOCRISY

The greatest quality of a believer is sincerity. Its opposite quality is known as hypocrisy. It is used in two meanings in the Sharīʿat. One is when a person rejects Islam from his heart while attesting to it with his tongue. When this meaning is taken, then in the Hereafter there is no difference between a hypocrite and an unbeliever. In fact, hypocrites will be in the lowest level of Hell.

Hypocrisy is one of the ailments of the heart

The other meaning of hypocrisy is when both the heart and tongue attest to Islam, but the person's verbal, carnal and heart sins have encompassed him – he is completely obliterated by them. He too is labelled a hypocrite by the Sharīʿat. This is the type of hypocrisy which the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* used to fear. It is also one of the ailments of the heart. When a person is caught up in it, then he goes to the extent of even ascribing partners with Allāh *taʿālā* in his quest for his needs. When the creation goes astray, it is solely because of its quest for its needs. After all, when a man cannot fulfil his own needs, he starts asking the help of those who are weaker and more incapable than his own self. He will sacrifice animals in their name, make vows for them, and will go to the extent of worshipping them. As long as this person does not reject Allāh *taʿālā*, Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the Hereafter; he will be referred to as a believer. This, notwithstanding the type of evils he is immersed in. However, this type of hypocrisy requires a lot of attention because people of this nature are not out of the circle of Islam. They will be punished [in Hell] and then admitted into Paradise.

Jealousy, pride and other similar ailments are included among the ailments of the heart, but the subject under discussion – hypocrisy – is a chronic ailment. Evils encompass the heart and the heart's capability to do good is virtually removed. When man reaches this level, he becomes a slave of his carnal self. Consequently, he seeks the help of others apart from Allāh *taʿālā* for the fulfilment of his needs. He has no qualms whatsoever about taking false oaths. It is as though his entire path has changed. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* writes in *al-Fauz al-Kabīr*:

> There is no difference between those who heard the teachings of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* directly from him (during his lifetime) and opted for hypocrisy, and those who were born after him and adopted ways against the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* despite learning of them with absolute conviction. If you want to see an example of this then go to the assemblies of the wealthy and observe how their associates and friends give preference to their likes [likes of the wealthy] over the likes of Allāh *taʿālā*."[1] In fact, this is the sad condition of the rulers and religious leaders of our times. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Did you see the condition and example of the hypocrites! Now apply the condition of the masses to this and see what is their attitude towards Allāh *taʿālā* and the Sharīʿat. Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* went to great lengths on the subject of

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[1] *Al-Fauz al-Kabīr*, p. 9.

hypocrisy. After all, he was the Mujaddid of his time. He did not see any scholar of his era speaking or writing on this subject.

A Hadīth on hypocrisy

One of my associates who is a Maulānā heard me speaking on this subject and conveyed it to the people of his place. When another Maulānā heard it, he was quite displeased. He said: "You are saying that Muslims are hypocrites!?" The Maulānā [my associate] was quite sharp. He opened the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* and showed him a Hadīth in which it is stated:

The hearts of man can be divided into four categories: (1) a heart which is (ajrad) completely barren, in which something like a light is shining, (2) a heart which is (aghlaf) covered by a type of covering, (3) a heart which is mankūs, and (4) a heart which is musaffah. (Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam himself explains each one): (1) An ajrad heart is the heart of a believer, and the light in it is the light of īmān. (2) An aghlaf heart is the heart of an unbeliever. (3) A mankūs heart is the heart of a hypocrite. It recognized the truth, but then rejected it. (4) A musaffah heart has both īmān and hypocrisy in it.

There is a constant conflict between the two. Sometimes, īmān demands that it be acted upon while hypocrisy draws the person towards itself. Whichever of the two qualities gains the upper hand eventually embeds itself in man. He either becomes a perfect believer or a pure hypocrite.

The Maulānā who was making objections fell silent when he saw this Hadīth.

I have concluded that whatever is happening in the world today is because of this hypocrisy. People's relationship with Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is not in order. They have included hypocrisy in Dīn as well and displeased Allāh *taʿālā*. When Allāh *taʿālā* is displeased with us, we will obviously lose peace and tranquillity in our Dīnī and worldly lives. It cannot happen that Allāh *taʿālā* is displeased with us and we are still able to live in peace and comfort. When the owner of a house is displeased, the first thing he will say is: "Get out of my house."

This is why I say you can disobey Allāh *taʿālā* if you want – it is your choice – but when disobedience becomes rife, Allāh *taʿālā* causes us to suffer all-encompassing calamities. Allāh *taʿālā* is certainly very forgiving. He Himself says:

وَيَعْفُوْ عَنْ كَثِيْرٍ

He pardons many sins.[1]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make this duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنَّكَ عَفُوٌّ كَرِيْمٌ تُحِبُّ الْعَفْوَ فَاعْفُ عَنِّيْ

O Allāh! You are most pardoning, most generous. You love to pardon, so pardon me.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to relate this story to us repeatedly. I do not know why he used to relate it to us. A saint passed away. His name was Yahyā ibn Aktham. He was a shaykh of Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh*. When he was presented before Allāh *taʿālā*, he was asked: "O you old man! Tell

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[1] Sūrah al-Mā'idah, 5: 15.

Me why did you do this?" He was left astounded and remained silent. He was asked again: "Why are you not talking?" When he was asked a few times, he said: "I had heard a Hadīth but now find myself in a situation different from it. I am therefore worried as to whether the text of the Hadīth is incorrect or the transmission (sanad) is wrong." He was asked: "Which Hadīth?" He then quoted the entire transmission and read the Hadīth which states that Allāh *taʿālā* feels shy [to punish] Muslims who have turned grey.[1] Allāh *taʿālā* said: "The Hadīth is correct. Go, I have pardoned you on account of it."

There is another incident that when a person was about to depart from this world, he heard this Hadīth. So he requested that when he dies, flour must be dusted on his beard so that it appears white. When he passed away, he was presented before Allāh *taʿālā* who asked: "What is this joke?!" The man said: "O Allāh! It is not a joke. Rather, I did it out of fear for Your punishment. I heard that You feel ashamed to punish a Muslim who has turned grey. I was neither old nor was it in my control to become old. I did this to imitate the form and appearance of old people." Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Very well, you may go. You are pardoned. I like this action of yours."

The lesson we learn from these incidents is that it is solely through Allāh's pardon and generosity that we can be saved – the abstinent and the sinner. A Hadīth states that on the day of Resurrection, a sinner will first try to conceal his sins. But when he sees that people are being paid for their sins, he will start exposing them. He will say: "I committed this sin as well, and that sin as well." A poet rightly said:

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[1] *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 14, p. 206.

> When Allāh *taʿālā* displayed His mercy on the day of Resurrection, I shouted out: “I am also a sinner.”

There was an old man in our village. He was older than my father. It was well known that he speaks a lot of lies. It was also well known that at night he cries profusely out of fear of the Hereafter and of Allāh’s punishment. Inshā Allāh, he will be saved on account of this action because a Hadīth states that the eye which cries out of Allāh’s fear is prohibited to the Hell-fire.[1]

If a person commits a sin out of human constraints, he should at least have the fear of Allāh *taʿālā* by virtue of his īmān.

Listen! We are made to fear hypocrisy so that people may develop affirmation in their hearts. It is most terrible if a person’s outer self is good while his inner self is evil. It is far better for a person to appear to be like a free and liberated person outwardly, while his inner self is good. A poet says:

> The ascetic could not cross the path safely because of his pride and arrogance. On the other hand, the sinner reached Paradise safely by virtue of his submission and humility.

The need for a guide

Nowadays there is a real need to work and strive. I see Muslims are now understanding the need for Dīn. I am noticing this in all sections of the community. However, the fact of the matter is that nothing can be

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[1] سنن ابن ماجه، كتاب الزهد، ٣٧، باب الحزن والبكاء، ١٩، حديث ٤١٩٧.

achieved without a teacher and mentor. And this is the path of Allāh *taʿālā* which is thinner than a strand of hair and sharper than a sword. The community may have turned for the better, but it needs a teacher so that it gets knowledge of the path. Man must be able to recognize his own worth, learn about the self, and save himself from sins. After all this, it is very easy to reach Allāh *taʿālā*. If you recognize Allāh *taʿālā* you will achieve much.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to quote the following couplets with much emotion, causing all those who were present in the assembly to be affected. He used to say:

> Desist and abstain from the evil conditions in which you are. If you are a kāfir or idol worshipper, desist from that as well. This court of ours is not a court of despondency and hopelessness. Even if you have broken your repentance a hundred times, desist from now on.

Glory to Allāh! These are most effective couplets which can make a man stand up in Allāh's cause. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

ADVICE WITH REGARD TO RECITATION OF THE QUR'ĀN

By Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh*

Note: When the statements of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* used to be published, he – out of his humility - used to say to us: "What is the need to publish them? The articles of Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* are such that if they are published, they will be more beneficial to the ummat." Hadrat would then show us which articles he was referring to. This is why we were in the practice of publishing articles from *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah.* (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

Hadrat Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Tafhīmāt*:

My first advice is to ensure that one's beliefs and practices are in accordance with the Qur'ān and Sunnat. After that, a person must occupy himself in both [Qur'ān and Sunnat] with tadabbur – pondering and reflection.[1]

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[1] This applies to the person who has the capability to ponder. It is not right to say that recitation without pondering is not valid. Rather, benefits can be accrued even without pondering. In other words, a person's īmān increases. Yes, it is certainly correct to say that the texts instruct us to ponder over the Qur'ān. This is an order on its own. Nonetheless, what I want to say is that recitation without understanding and pondering is also considered by Allāh *ta'ālā,* is desired by the Sharī'at and guarantees many blessings. In order to prove my point, I quote an incident about Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* as related in *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm.* The Imām saw Allāh *ta'ālā* in a dream and

asked Him: “O Allāh! Which is the most superior way of gaining proximity to You?” Allāh *taʿālā* replied: “O A<u>h</u>mad! It is through the recitation of My speech [the Qur’ān].” Imām A<u>h</u>mad asked: “With understanding or without understanding?” Allāh *taʿālā* said: “Either way – with understanding or without understanding.”

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* quotes this incident in his *a<u>t</u>-<u>T</u>abaqāt al-Kubrā* with additional explanations:

كان رضي الله عنه يقول في معنى قول الإمام أحمد بن حنبل رضي الله عنه حين رأى رب العزة جل جلاله في منامه، فقال يا رب بما يتقرب إليك المتقربون. قال بكلامي يا أحمد. قال: قلت: يا رب بفهم أو بغير فهم. قال: بفهم أو بغير بفهم. المراد بفهم ما يتعلق بعلماء الشريعة وبغير فهم ما يتعلق بعلماء الحقيقة. فإن العلماء ما لهم آلة لفهم كلام الله تعالى إلا بالفكر. وأما العارفون فطريقتهم إلى فهمه الكشف والتعريف الإلهي، وذلك لا يحتاج إلى تفهم.

Sayyid ʿAlī Damīrī ra<u>h</u>imahullāh explains the statement of Imām A<u>h</u>mad ibn <u>H</u>ambal ra<u>h</u>imahullāh that when he saw Allāh taʿālā in a dream and asked: “O Allāh! How do the close servants gain proximity to you?” Allāh taʿālā said: “O A<u>h</u>mad! By (reciting) My speech.” He asked: “O Allāh! With understanding or without understanding?” Allāh taʿālā said: “Either way – with understanding or without understanding.” Reading the Qur’ān with understanding applies to the ʿulamā’ of the Sharīʿat. Reading it without understanding applies to the ʿulamā’ of the <u>H</u>aqīqat. This is because the ʿulamā’ of the Sharīʿat have no tool for understanding the Qur’ān except for pondering and reflecting. As for the ʿārifīn, their way of understanding the Qur’ān is through kashf (exposition) and divine explanation. This does not require any understanding.

فقيل له فما تقول فيمن يقرأ من العوام من غير فهم، فقال قد صح أن له بكل حرف عشر حسنات. فتحت قوله وبغير فهم مسئلتان. (الطبقات الكبرى للشعراني، ج ٢، ص ١٣٧).

Someone then asked him: “Okay, what do you have to say about the Qur’ān recitation of the laity who read it without understanding?” He replied: “An authentic <u>H</u>adīth states that

such a person will be given ten rewards for every letter." Thus, the words "without understanding" of Imām Aẖmad raẖimahullāh contain two issues (one is the recitation of the laity and the other of the ʿārifīn).

This dream of Imām Aẖmad *raẖimahullāh* has been quoted by Imām Ghazzālī *raẖimahullāh* in *Iẖyā' ʿUlūm ad-Dīn* and ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *raẖimahullāh* in *aṯ-Ṯabaqāt al-Kubrā*. Many ʿulamā' and Sufis have been relating it ever since and no one has ever rejected or refuted it. Thus, it is as though they are all unanimous with regard to its authenticity. We could therefore present it to state that even if the Qur'ān is recited without pondering and understanding, it is one of the highest means of gaining proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why the Sufis of every era paid particular attention to it and advised those who came after them. H̲ad̲rat Shāh S̲āẖib *raẖimahullāh* himself says that a person must make it a habit to read a certain portion of the Qur'ān on a daily basis.

ʿAllāmah Nawawī *raẖimahullāh* writes as follows in *Kitāb al-Adhkār* on this subject:

والمختار أن ذلك يختلف باختلاف الأشخاص، فمن كان يظهر له بدقيق الفكر لطائف ومعارف فليقتصر على قدر يحصل له معه كمال فهم ما يقرأ، وكذلك من كان مشغولا بنشر العلم أو فصل الحكومات بين المسلمين أو غير ذلك من مهمات الدين والمصالح العامة للمسلمين. فليقتصر على قدر لا يحصل بسببه إخلال بما هو مرصد له ولا فوت كماله.

ومن لم يكن من هولاء المذكورين فليستكثر ما أمكنه من غير خروج إلى حد الملل أو الهذرمة في القراءة. (كتاب الأذكار، ص ٩٩)

The extent of the recitation will differ on account of the different conditions of people. For example, the person to whom the subtle and intricate sciences of the Qur'ān are exposed after deep pondering will suffice with reading only that much through which he can clearly understand whatever he reads. Similarly, the person who is occupied in resolving the disputes of Muslims, or other important matters

Furthermore, a person must read some portion of both everyday without missing out on any day. If he cannot read them, he should at least listen to one page of the translation of each. As regards beliefs, he must tread the creed and beliefs of the Ahl as-Sunnat wa al-Jamāʿat of the past.

He must abstain from investigating matters which have not been established and related by the seniors

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of Dīn and general wellbeing of Muslims – he should confine to only that amount of Qur'ān recitation which would not interfere with the fulfilment of his duties and cause him to miss out their completion.

As for the one who is free from the above-mentioned occupations, he must read as much as he can provided it does not cause him to become weary and bored, and does not prompt him to read too fast.

The ʿulamā' say that from among the essential etiquette at the time of recitation, the most important is sincerity. ʿAllāmah Nawawī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* writes in *Kitāb al-Adhkār* in this regard:

فأول ما يومر به الإخلاص في قراءته وأن يريد بها الله سبحانه وتعالى، وأن لا يقصد بها توصلا إلى شيء سوى ذلك، وأن يتأدب مع القرآن ويستحضر في ذهنه أن يناجي الله سبحانه وتعالى، ويتلو كتابه، فيقرأ على حال من يرى الله فإنه إن لم يره فإن الله تعالى يراه. (الفتوحات الربانية على الأذكار النووية، ج ٤، ص ٢٣٤).

The first order at the time of reciting the Qur'ān is that of sincerity, that he must be doing it solely for Allāh taʿālā and he must not use it as a means for the acquisition of anything else. Furthermore, he must be most respectful towards the Qur'ān, and be conscious of the fact that he is conversing with Allāh taʿālā and reading His Book. He must therefore read like a person who is seeing Allāh taʿālā. If he is not on this level, he must at least think to himself that Allāh taʿālā is watching him.

of the past. He must not pay any attention to the rational objections which the philosophers have made against almost everything. He must follow the Hadīth scholars in subsidiary issues because they combine fiqh and Hadīth. He must always gauge juridical issues with the Qur'ān and Sunnat. If an issue is in line with them, he must act on it; if not, he must reject it. Understand well that the ummat can never be independent of presenting its mujtahdāt (juridical issues) before the Qur'ān and Sunnat and acting accordingly. Do not pay any attention to fanatical jurists who consider the taqlīd of a scholar to be a decree and totally abandon investigation and research. Instead, search for proximity with Allāh *taʿālā* by remaining distant from them.

ETIQUETTE FOR THE MASHĀ'IKH

H̲ad̲rat Shāh Walī Allāh S̲āh̲ib Muh̲addith Dehlawī *rah̲imahullāh* writes on the etiquette to be observed by the Sufis and those occupied in inviting towards Allāh *taʿālā*. He states:

If a person expresses his desire to pledge bayʿat, do not delay in accepting it. If a person would like to start dhikr and other devotional practices, do not delay in prescribing a programme for him because it is said that there is a tribulation for everything, and there are many tribulations for knowledge. It is essential for you to set aside some time at night in which you can focus on your self. You must force yourself to take out a certain amount of time from your daily occupations of meeting people, speaking to them and so on. (What this means is that do not wait for free time because then you will never find it and you will not be able to do anything. Rather, you will have to make it a point to take out this time). In this time, you must focus yourself totally to do your work. You must also set aside another time wherein you teach and pass on knowledge. Then you must have another time wherein you cast spiritual ecstasy into the hearts of those who are desirous of it. reserve another time in which you meet and greet those who come to meet you.

A propagator must adopt five qualities

If a person is occupied in calling people towards Allāh *taʿālā* and they too turn to him, then he will have to do what the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* did because he is emulating them and following in their footsteps.

It is essential for him to adopt five qualities. If he leaves out just one of them, he will be considered to be defective in that regard. The five qualities are:

(1) To study and acquire the religious sciences.

(2) To enjoin good and forbid evil in a soft and affectionate manner; not with harshness and severity.

(3) To show equal affection to everyone irrespective of whether he is learned or ignorant. Anyway, he will have to assess and gauge the rank of each person and treat him accordingly. It is not very difficult to do this because an ignorant person will only be pleased with a soft approach. On the other hand, ʿulamā' need to be shown a bit of respect.

(4) To cut off all hopes and desires from the wealth and belongings of people, and to abstain completely from interfering in their affairs.

(5) If he has the means, he must personally see to the needs and hospitality of guests, students, seekers and so on. If he does not have the means, he must encourage his close associates to see to their comfort. After all, the one who points to a good deed receives the same reward as the one who does it.

May Allāh *taʿālā* keep you firm on the upright Dīn and the straight path. Āmīn.[1]

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[1] *Tafhīmāt Ilāhīyyah*, vol. 2, p. 103.

THREE IMPORTANT POINTS TOWARDS WHICH THE PROPHETS INVITED

أم بعد. فيقول خادم العلماء والصوفية والمتمسك بأذيالهم العلية ولي الله بن عبد الرحيم عاملهما الله بفضله العظيم، إن من أجل نعم الله تعالى التي لا يستطيع العباد شكرها أن بعث الأنبياء مترجمين عن الغيب هادين إلى طرق التقرب إلى الله تعالى ليهلك من هلك عن بينة ويحيي من حي عن بينة، ثم جعل لهم ورثة يقومون بعلمهم بين الناس ويحيون سننهم ويدعون إلى رشدهم.

This servant of the ʿulamā' and Sufis who holds on to their lofty ways, Walī Allāh ibn ʿAbd ar-Ra<u>h</u>īm – may Allāh taʿālā treat both of them with His mighty grace – says: The greatest favour which man cannot thank Allāh taʿālā for is the fact that He sent Prophets who conveyed the unseen and guided towards the paths which would take one closer to Allāh taʿālā so that whoever dies thereafter will die with clear knowledge, and the one who lives will live with clear knowledge. Allāh taʿālā then appointed heirs for the Prophets ʿalayhimus salām who would spread their knowledge among people, revive their ways and invite them towards their rectitude.

ومعظم ما دعت إلى إقامته الرسل أمور ثلاثة.

From among the things towards whose establishment the Messengers ʿalayhimus salām invited towards, three are of paramount importance:

١. تصحيح العقائد في المبدأ والمعاد والمجازاة وغيرها، وقد تكفل بهذا الفن أهل الأصول من علماء الأمة شكر الله تعالى مساعيهم.

1. Rectification of beliefs with regard to man's beginning, the Hereafter, recompense of deeds, and so on. The scholastic theologians from the ʿulamā' of the Muslim nation undertook to fulfil this responsibility. May Allāh taʿālā reward them for their efforts.

تصحيح العمل في الطاعات المقربة والارتفاقات الضرورية على وفق السنة، وقد تكفل هذا الفن فقهاء الأمة فهدى الله بهم كثيرين وأقام بهم فرقة عوجاء.

2. Rectifying one's actions in acts of obedience which take one closer to Allāh taʿālā. Also, to take benefit from the necessities of life in accordance with the Sunnat. The jurists of the Muslim nation took care of this department. Consequently, Allāh taʿālā guided many through them, and set right many deviated sects through them.

وتصحيح الإخلاص والإحسان الذين هما أصلا الدين الحنيفي الذي ارتضاه الله لعباده، قال تبارك وتعالى: وَمَآ اُمِرُوا اِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللّٰهَ مُخْلِصِيْنَ لَهُ الدِّيْنَ، حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَذٰلِكَ دِيْنُ الْقَيِّمَةِ.

2. Rectifying one's sincerity and Allāh-consciousness both of which are the fundamentals of this pure religion which Allāh taʿālā chose for His servants. Allāh taʿālā says: They were solely ordered to worship Allāh,

devotedly worshipping Him [alone] – turning away (from all false creeds).[1]

وقال:اِنَّ الْمُتَّقِيْنَ فِيْ جَنّٰتٍ وَّعُيُوْنٍ. اٰخِذِيْنَ مَا اٰتٰهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ. اِنَّهُمْ كَانُوْا قَبْلَ ذٰلِكَ مُحْسِنِيْنَ. كَانُوْا قَلِيْلًا مِّنَ الَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُوْنَ. وَبِالْاَسْحَارِ هُمْ يَسْتَغْفِرُوْنَ. وَفِيْ اَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ. وَفِي الْاَرْضِ اٰيَاتٌ لِّلْمُوْقِنِيْنَ. وَفِيْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَفَلَا تُبْصِرُوْنَ.

Allāh taʿālā says: The righteous ones are in gardens and fountains. Taking what their Lord gave them. They were doers of good before this [day]. They used to sleep but little at night. And in the hours of dawn they used to seek forgiveness. In their wealth there was a share for the beggar and the defeated. In the earth are signs for those who have conviction. And within your own selves [as well]. Will you not then see?[2]

وقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: إنما الأعمال بالنيات. وقال في جواب جبرئيل عليه السلام: "الإحسان أن تعبد الله كأنك تراه فإن لم تكن تراه فإنه يراك." والذي نفسي بيده هذا الثالث أدق المقاصد الشرعية مأخذا وأعمقها محتدا، وهو بالنسبة إلى سائر الشرائع بمنزلة الروح من الجسد، وبمنزلة المعنى من اللفظ، وقد تكفل به الصوفية رضوان الله عليهم أجمعين، فاهتدوا وهدوا، واستقوا وسقوا، وفازوا

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[1] Sūrah al-Bayyinah, 98: 5.

[2] Sūrah adh-Dhāriyāt, 51: 15-21.

بالسعادة القصوٰى وحازوا السهم الأعلى، فللّٰه درهم ما أعم نفعهم وأتم نورهم.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Actions are based on intentions." He said in reply to the question of Jibra'īl ʿalayhis salām: "Ihsān means that you must worship Allāh as though you are seeing Him. If you cannot imagine this, then understand well that He is seeing you." I take an oath by the Being in whose control is my life, this third category is the most intricate and deepest of the objectives of the Sharīʿah as regards the source. When compared to all other Sharīʿahs, it is like the soul in the body, and essence of a word. The Sufis – may Allāh taʿālā be pleased with them – undertook to uphold this science. Subsequently, they were guided by it and they guided others, they "drank" from its fountain and satiated the thirst of others. They acquired the highest level of good-fortune and took the greatest share of it. For Allāh alone is their excellence. Look at how all-encompassing their benefit is, and how perfect their light is!

ولما كان رضاء الحق أن علماء الأمة إن يسعوا في بقاء النور المأخوذ من الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم وإشاعته وحمل الناس على الإهتداء به كما قال: "فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ" الآية. وقال: "وَلٰكِنْ كُوْنُوْا رَبَّانِيِّيْنَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تُعَلِّمُوْنَ الْكِتَابَ وَبِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَدْرُسُوْنَ." توارثوا نصب الخلفاء وبعث الدعاة عصرا بعد عصر وطبقة بعد طبقة لتكون كلمة الله هي العليا وليتحقق على أيديهم ما وعد الله في محكم كتابه حيث قال" وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُوْنَ.

Allāh's pleasure demanded that the ʿulamā' of the ummat strive to uphold the light which was derived from the Prophets, to proliferate it, and to encourage people to obtain guidance through it. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard: "Why should it not be that a small group from every large group goes out…" Allāh taʿālā says: "Become true servants of Allāh by virtue of the fact that you teach the Book and you study it." Consequently, the practice of appointing caliphs and sending propagators was established in every era and every level of society. This was done so that the word of Allāh taʿālā may reign supreme and so that what Allāh taʿālā promised in His Book will be realized at their hands, viz. "We alone are its protectors."

والخلافة ظاهرة وباطنة، فالخلافة الظاهرة إقامة الجهاد والقضاء والحدود وجباية العشور والخراج وقسمتها على مستحقيها، وقد حمل أعباءها العادلون من ملوك الإسلام.

Caliphate is of two types, one is external and the other is internal. The external caliphate entails the establishment of jihād, a judiciary, the penal code, the collection of ʿushr and kharāj, their distribution to those who are eligible, and so on. This responsibility was borne by those Muslim rulers who were just.

والخلافة الباطنة تعليم الكتاب والحكمة وتزكيتهم بالنور الباطن بقوارع الوعظ وجواذب الصحبة، كما قال عز من قائل: لَقَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ إِذْ بَعَثَ فِيْهِمْ رَسُوْلًا مِّنْ أَنْفُسِهِمْ يَتْلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ اٰيٰتِهِ وَيُزَكِّيْهِمْ وَيُعَلِّمُهُمُ الْكِتٰبَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ، وَاِنْ كَانُوْا مِنْ قَبْلُ لَفِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ.

The internal caliphate entails teaching the Book and wisdom, purifying the hearts of people with internal

light through heart-rending lectures and good companionship which attracts the people to it. Allāh taʿālā says in this regard: "Allāh bestowed a favour on the believers when He sent in their midst a Messenger from among themselves - he recites to them His verses and purifies them [from polytheism and other evils], and teaches them the Book and things of benefit. Previously they were in manifest error."[1]

وفيهم قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم: العلماء ورثة الأنبياء. وقال: فضل العالم على العابد كفضلي على أدناكم. ولا يكون الخلية إلا من جمع المقاصد الثلاثة التي ذكرناها، وحفظ الكتاب السنة، وتدرب في قوانين السلوك وتربية السالكين.[٢]

It is with reference to such people that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "The ʿulamā' are the heirs of the Prophets." He said: "The superiority of a scholar over a worshipper is like my superiority over the lowest of you." Only the person who combines three objectives which we mentioned previously can be eligible to be a caliph. Furthermore, he must be one who preserves the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and has experience in the laws of Sufism and the training of those treading the Sufi path.

Note: These are extremely important points which the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh must read. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* for having included these important themes which are

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 164.

[2] تفهيمات إلٰهية، ج ١، ص ١٢.

sources of admonishment for us. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī, Rajab 1432 A.H.)

THE VALUE OF A BOND WITH ALLĀH (1)

Just before the assembly could commence, Hakīm Muhammad Masʿūd Gangohī Ajmerī Sāhib said: “The greatest benefit of coming here in the service of Hadrat is that as long as I am here, I feel a special type of peace and tranquillity in my heart. If I did not have any other responsibilities, I would have remained here permanently. My brother, Muhammad Ahmad, predicted that there will come a time when I will remain permanently in Allāhābād.” This much was spoken before the assembly. It was then the time for the assembly to commence and all the people came in.

Hadrat Wālā spoke in support of what Hakīm Sāhib said by saying: I heard Hadrat *rahimahullāh* saying repeatedly that if the kings only came to know of the treasure which we have with us, they would muster their armies and attack us. But this treasure cannot be acquired through armies. It is acquired through humility and submission, and by humbling one’s self before a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. This quality is disappearing in our times. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثٰى وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهُ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً

Whoever did good, be it man or woman, and is a believer, to him We will give a good life.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* has not reserved His rewards and generosity for Paradise alone. Rather, He confers them to His righteous servants in this world as well. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this verse that whoever does good – whether man or woman – he will receive a good life

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[1] Sūrah an-Nahl, 16: 97.

provided he or she is a believer. The commentators of the Qur'ān have gone into much detail in explaining what a "good life" is.

Hadrat Ja'far *radiyallāhu 'anhu* says that it refers to the recognition of Allāh *ta'ālā*, true consciousness of Allāh's presence, and total presence of mind as regards Allāh's orders.

Hadrat Ibn 'Atā' *rahimahullāh* says that a "good life" refers to living with Allāh *ta'ālā* and turning away from everything apart from Him. In other words, man lives his life in the light of Allāh's orders, and carries out all his affairs in the shade of Allāh's pleasure in the sense that his heart is empty of all except Allāh *ta'ālā*.

We learn from this verse that a good life in this world is not the reserve of men only. Rather, if anyone – whether man or woman – does good deeds, then Allāh *ta'ālā* blesses them with a good life. I say: A good life refers to that internal treasure which surpasses external physical sultanates. We just said previously that if the sultans were to learn of it, they would come and attack with their armies. There are countless stories of the saints whom, by virtue of their sincerity and devotion, Allāh *ta'ālā* honoured with His bounties and excellences.

Admonitory lessons of women

(1)

A woman was informed that her child drowned in a lake. On hearing this, she went to the edge of the lake and called out her child's name. The child answered from inside: "Yes mother!" The mother said: "Come here." The child emerged immediately. This is known as an extraordinary or supernatural event which is

also enjoyed by the Auliyā’. The people asked the woman: “How did you know that he is alive?” She replied: “I have a special bond with Allāh *taʿālā* through which He informs me before hand of what is to happen. He did not inform me about this, so I concluded that my child is alive. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* does not do contrary to His norm even though we may do.”

Allāh *taʿālā* displayed one supernatural feat of this woman so that people may ask her and it may come out into the open. Allāh *taʿālā* sometimes displays supernatural events like these through the women of Islam.

(2)

A saint was proceeding towards Madīnah. On the way he slapped the son of a Bedouin. Subsequently, the daily visit of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which he used to enjoy came to an end. People like this are known as *h̲ud̲ūrī* (a person who enjoys the presence of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*). This saint enjoyed a lofty position which was now taken away from him. He was travelling towards Madīnah and respect has to be shown to the residents of the city and surrounding areas of the beloved. Even if the boy had erred, the saint ought to have restrained himself solely on the basis that the boy was a neighbour of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, he hit the boy. Allāh *taʿālā* disliked his action and therefore took away that bounty which he enjoyed. The saint sought the boy’s pardon, gave him some money, pacified his parents but the visit of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was still shut off from him.

He went to the ‘ulamā’ and mashā’ikh of Madīnah and sought their help and intercession but they all replied

by saying that the matter is beyond them. They then referred him to a certain woman and said that she will be able to do what he wants. The saint went to her and related the situation to her. She pointed her finger towards the blessed grave of Rasūlullāh s̠allallāhu *ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: “Look!” When he looked up, he saw Rasūlullāh *s̠allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He thus saw him in a state of wakefulness. Previously he used to see Rasūlullāh *s̠allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a dream but now, through this woman, he saw Rasūlullāh *s̠allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in a state of wakefulness.

You people are enjoying what I am saying, but learn the lessons from these stories. These orators do not teach you practical things. If they related to you incidents and discussed themes which prompted you towards action, then your power of action would be awakened and you would also understand the spiritual conditions of the saints. However, to deliver a lecture one will have to be a practising person himself. Before he can practise, he will have to have knowledge, and this is difficult.

This incident is also of a woman. I related it while on the subject that Allāh *taʿālā* honours His righteous servants in this world as well, irrespective of whether they are males or females. Men have reached great heights, and so did women. Listen to another story.

(3)

A saint was sitting in meditation. A person passed by him. It was dark, so he walked into the saint. The latter said: “Are you blind!?” The moment he said this, the man became blind. Sometimes it happens that when a saint says something, it occurs as he says. This is a genuine occurrence. A H̠adīth states: “A person continues getting closer to Me through optional

acts (after having fulfilled the obligatory acts) until he becomes My beloved. Once he becomes My beloved, I become his eyes through which he sees, his hands with which he holds, and his tongue with which he speaks."[1]

When a saint reaches this level, then whatever he says happens accordingly. This saint was also on this level. When he said: "Are you blind?", the man became blind. The man went to his shaykh and related the entire incident to him. The shaykh called for this saint and said to him: "It is now your responsibility to see to his daily needs such as going and leaving the toilet, feeding him and so on. You must take him to the toilet and render all other services to him." The poor saint's supernatural feat now became a major inconvenience for his own self. When six months passed in this way, the shaykh said to his blind disciple: "When you come to know that the saint is in meditation at night, you must go and knock into him wittingly."

The man found an opportunity and did as he was told. The saint said to him: "You must look where you are walking, you must look." The man's eyesight was restored. The saint had already experienced the misfortune of his previous statement, this is why he was cautious with the words which he uttered. By virtue of the shaykh's prescription, this saint was also rectified and people too became afraid and realized that they have to be very careful when dealing with him.

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[1] صحيح البخاري، باب التواضع، ٣٨، كتاب الرقاق حديث ٦٥٠٢، مجمع الزوائد، ص ج ١٠، ص ٣٤٤، كتاب الزهد.

We will have to believe in incidents of this nature. Just as the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* have miracles, the auliyā' have karāmāt – supernatural feats. A karāmat is a branch of the miracles of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and is received by total emulation of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

(4)

When I was in Gorukhpūr, the people related to me that there was a lion in the nearby jungle. A saint lived nearby. Whenever he wanted to go anywhere, he would summon the lion and hold it by its ear. He would stand up and sit on the lion. It would then take him wherever he wanted, and bring him back at exactly the same spot. The lion used to live in that one place, would not harm anyone and would not go anywhere. Glory to Allāh! What a strange story!

(5)

A man from the royal family used to receive a monthly stipend. On the other hand, when he needed to cook, he would place rice, pulse and water in a pot and place it over the fireplace. He would not light any fire. All he would do is sit next to the pot and say: "Get cooked, get cooked." He would say this a few times and the food would get cooked.

(6)

A saint sat on a lion and went to a certain person who was sitting on a wall. The man said to the wall: "You too walk." The wall began walking. The saint who approached on the lion realized that this man is on a higher level than him.

H̲akīm Ajmerī S̲āh̲ib spoke about peace and tranquillity [as related at the beginning of this chapter]. What can we say about the peace and

tranquillity enjoyed by the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and auliyā'!? These personalities enjoy the highest station of reliance on Allāh's pleasure and tranquillity.

(7)

A Qārī Sāhib went to a saint who used to live in a jungle. A river was flowing nearby. The Qārī Sāhib went to the edge of the river to relieve himself. A lion lived not far away and chased the man. He came running to the saint, and the lion also came near. The saint scolded the lion by saying: "Did I not prohibit you from troubling my guests?" The lion went away wagging its tail. The saint then turned to the man and said: "We have purified our hearts, this is why the lion fears us. On the other hand, you have purified your tongue only, this is why you fear the lion."

> When you are in the presence of spiritual masters, focus on your heart so that you do not have to suffer embarrassment in their presence.

All these things are known as karāmāt, and the karāmāt of the auliyā' are true. A karāmat is only given to a person who believes in it from the beginning. If a person does not even believe in it, he cannot expect to receive it.

ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *rahimahullāh* said:

وإنما أنكرها أكثر المعتزلة بعدمها فيما بينهم

Most of the Muʿtazilah rejected karāmāt because they received no share of it.

I say that the reason for not receiving a share of it was because of their rejection.

I was saying: The auliyā’ are given karāmāt just as the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are given muʿjizāt or miracles. Just as wilāyat is a branch of prophet-hood, karāmat is a branch of muʿjizah. Allāh *taʿālā* honours His righteous servants through karāmāt. A believer will certainly be honoured in the Hereafter. However, Allāh *taʿālā* confers many bounties and favours to His righteous servants even in this world. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā’:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَسْئَلُكَ نَعِيْمًا لَّا يَنْفَدُ، وَقُرَّةَ عَيْنٍ لَّا تَنْقَطِعُ، وَاَسْئَلُكَ الرِّضَا بِالْقَضَاءِ.[1]

O Allāh! I ask You for a favour which does not end, delight of the eyes which is not severed, and I ask You that I be pleased with Your decree.

Another Hadīth states:

اعددت لعبادي الصالحين ما لا عين رأت، ولا أذن سمعت، ولا خطر على قلب بشر.[2]

[Allāh taʿālā says]: I have prepared for My righteous servants such things which no eye has beheld, no ear has heard about, and which did not cross the heart of any human.

Obviously if a person did not see something, how will he describe it? If no one can describe it, how will anyone hear it? We can only describe Paradise and its

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[1] سنن النسائي، ١٣٠٧، باب ٦٢، نوع آخر كتاب السهو،

[2] صحيح البخاري حديث ٣٢٤٤، باب ما جاء في صفة الجنة أنها مخلوقة.

bounties to the extent described by Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in the Qur'ān and Hadīth. We cannot use our intellects in this regard. This is why I say that the ʿulamā' cannot speak about Paradise and Hell to you. They cannot describe anything with their intellects. As for what Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said in this regard, the ʿulamā' do not have the time to remember them.

(8)

The time for the jumuʿah salāh was approaching. The mu'adhdhin was gone to the riverside to wash the mats and other items of the masjid. He dived into the river and ended up a far distance from where he originally was. He came out of the water, went to the inhabitancy nearby and found that it was a totally different place, with very different people. He began living there, got married there and got children as well. One day he went to the river to take a bath. When he dived in, he emerged near his original place of residence. He noticed the mats and other items which he had brought lying on the riverbank as they had been. He picked them up and went towards the inhabitancy. He found the people assembled in the masjid, waiting for him. When they saw him they said: "Come quickly, Mu'adhdhin Sāhib! Call out the adhān because it is getting late."

Now I ask you to apply your minds to this incident. Will you be able to apply your minds?! The mu'adhdhin then related the entire incident to a saint who said:

وَإِنَّ يَوْمًا عِنْدَ رَبِّكَ كَأَلْفِ سَنَةٍ مِّمَّا تَعُدُّوْنَ

A single day by your Lord is equal to a thousand years which you count.[1]

"Did you ever ponder over this verse?" He replied: "I did ponder over it." The saint said: "You have been given an answer to it through this incident."

I say: We will have to accept these things. We can progress only through īmān and affirmation.

Those who are known as intellectuals will have to cast aside their intellects, while the believers will go to Paradise. Of what benefit is an intellect if it cannot save a person from Hell? Many of the great self-proclaimed intellectuals will be seen in Hell.

Now listen to this anecdote: An Englishman got very angry at his cook, scolded him profusely and said: "Go away from here?" The man replied: "Sir, where should I go?" The Englishman replied furiously: "Go to Hell." The man left, walked around a bit and came back. The moment the Englishman's eyes fell on him, he scolded him and asked: "You didn't go as yet!?" The man replied: "Sir, you asked me to go to Hell, but there was no place there. It was filled with sirs, this is why I came back." The Englishman was amused by his reply and pardoned him.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What a silencing and mind-straightening reply!

(9)

There was a Miyā Jī who used to be with H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Rashīd Ah̲mad Gangohī *rah̲imahullāh*. He used to teach Qur'ān to the children. Sometimes he would hit a student with a twig. The next time he

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[1] Sūrah al-H̲ajj, 22: 47.

would give the twig to the student and say: “Here, you must now hit me. Take your revenge in this world, do not demand it in the Hereafter.”

Some people came from Murādābād and expressed their desire to take the Miyā Jī with them. Hadrat Gangohī *rahimahullāh* said: “There is just this one Muslim here and you want to take him away as well!?”

Just think! There were many great and erudite ‘ulamā’ there, yet Hadrat is saying there is just this one Muslim here. The reason he said this was because of the Miyā Jī’s fear for the Hereafter. It is through this fear that taqwā comes into a person and he establishes a correct relationship with Allāh *ta‘ālā*. Consequently, he recognizes and fulfils the rights of the Creator and the creation. This is what the Muslims of today need to develop. This will develop through simple lectures on the Qur’ān, describing the themes of encouragement and fear from the Ahādīth, and studying the lives and stories of the righteous. Mere philosophical lectures will not help. Do not interpolate Islam and the Sharī‘at with philosophy. There will certainly be rational and intellectual enjoyment, but the power of practical application will be completely destroyed. This is what we see nowadays. Powerful speeches are delivered but the practical application is absent. People of the past used to pay more attention to clarity of the heart over clarity of the tongue. Following the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* and his noble characteristics are enough for this.

(10)

An Englishman embraced Islam. He used to join the Muslims in performing salāh in the masjid. One day he remarked: “The drain where the wudū’ water flows is getting very dirty; it ought to be cleaned.” Instead of

agreeing with him and cleaning it, the people felt offended. They said to him: "Your Englishness hasn't left you as yet. It seems you did not become a Muslim with your heart." This new Muslim listened to what they said silently. He did not say anything and left. The chiefs of the city came to know of what transpired. They thought to themselves that he is still a new Muslim, and the people were quite harsh towards him. It must not happen that he reneges from Islam. They went to his house and said: "We have heard about the altercation which took place between you and those people in the masjid. We are most saddened." He replied: "What are you people saying? You are probably thinking that my heart has become disinclined to Islam because of what they said. This is not the case because I did not become a Muslim after observing the lives and character of the Muslims. After all, there was nothing in them which attracted me. I became a Muslim after observing the pure characteristics and simple teachings of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*."

"I know that Islam lays a lot of stress on purity and cleanliness, and this is what prompted me to tell them [to clean the drain]. But when they replied as they did, I concluded that these people have no knowledge of the teachings of their own religion. This is why whatever they said did not affect me in any way. You people can be rest assured that I am not going to give up Islam."

Look! He was a new Muslim but he was aware of Islamic teachings. On the other hand, the people were old Muslims but did not know even the basic teachings of Islam.

(11)

Just as the Englishman said that he became a Muslim on account of the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, a woman made a similar statement. She belonged to a royal family. A bidʿatī ʿālim tried to humiliate and disgrace an Allāh-fearing ʿālim in a public gathering. He said bad things about this ʿālim to the woman. The Allāh-fearing ʿālim was to deliver a talk at the woman's house. Coincidentally, he was delayed in arriving. The opposition found an opportunity to take advantage of the situation and instilled even more evil thoughts about him to the woman. The Allāh-fearing ʿālim (Hadrat Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd Sāhib *rahimahullāh*) then arrived. The moment he entered, he gauged and surmised the nature of the assembly and realized that it was something else. The woman was behind a curtain. She took the name of the Maulānā by saying: "Has such and such Maulānā arrived?" The Maulānā replied: "I see, our respected mother is also here! Salām to you, respected mother." Women are generally pleased when they are addressed in this manner. She felt quite ashamed. She then said: "I heard that you stop people from such and such actions." The Maulānā replied: "Certainly not." She said: "But this is what people are saying." The Maulānā said: "They are wrong." He then said: "I do not stop them, but Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* certainly prohibits such actions." He then quoted this Hadīth:

كل بدعة ضلالة وكل ضلالة في النار[1]

Every innovation is deviation, and every deviation conveys to the Hell-fire.

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[1] سنن النسائي، عيدين، ١٦، باب كيف الخطبة، ٢٢، حديث ١٥٧٩.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ismāʿīl Shahīd S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* then delivered a talk which left a deep mark on the audience. When the talk ended, the senior woman addressed all the women saying: "Listen! Our īmān is on Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and not on anyone else. We used to do these things [innovations] because we assumed that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is pleased with them and approves of them. Now that we have learnt that he is displeased by them, we will abstain from them. If anyone does any of those actions here it will not bode well for them."

I related this incident to demonstrate that not very long ago, the beliefs of the women were so firm that they were convinced that Dīn entails following the path of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Thus, no sooner they learnt that a certain action is not the way of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, they abstained from it immediately.

(12)

Some people complained about the Sufis before a king. The king issued the death sentence, and ordered that they all be sent to the executioner. Each one of them went forward and asked the executioner to execute him first. The executioner was surprised and said: "People generally try to save their lives. Why are you coming forward to be executed?" They replied: "We are Sufis and it is our teaching to give preference to others over one's own self. This is why we desired for our fellow brothers to live longer." The executioner was amazed by their reply. He sent them back to the judge with a message stating that these people appear to be pious and he should review their case. When the judge spoke to them they replied in a manner which reduced him to tears. He sent a message to the king

stating that these people are internally pure, and someone must have complained incorrectly about them. If these people are not Muslims, then there are no other Muslims in the entire world.

(13)

Some people got hold of Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* and took him to the king. When the king heard his speech, he began crying and asked: "Who imprisoned you?" He then addressed the people saying: "Take him with full honour and dignity to where you brought him from." The king added: "When the saints are spoken about in an assembly and Hadrat Dhun Nūn Misrī is not mentioned, then it is as if no mention of the saints was made."

(14)

Khwājah ʿAzīz al-Hasan Majdhūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says with reference to tranquillity of the heart:

> The enmity of the creation is to become my guide. The hand which is seeking [to harm me] is to make duʿā' for me. You desired my harm but I am to progress. The sharpness of the dagger on my throat is to become the water of eternal life in my favour.

Enmity towards the saints of Allāh undoubtedly becomes a source of guidance. This is because when the creation becomes their enemies, they sever their ties from the creation and turn completely to Allāh *taʿālā* who then gives them success.

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* was conducting a Hadīth lesson when he quoted a Hindi poem. He then screamed so loudly that everyone fell unconscious.

When they recovered, he said: “This is how I normally teach Hadīth.” What he meant was that when a person studies Hadīth, it conveys him to the one to whom the Hadīth is attributed [Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*]. Other teachers only convey the words of the Hadīth to the ears, while Hadrat Maulānā Ganj Murādābādī *rahimahullāh* conveys it to the hearts. Since we are talking about him, listen to the following incident:

A person saw a book of the Aryans in which objections against Islam were levelled. The man lost confidence in Islam. It was the month of Ramadān and he was fasting. He thought to himself that if Islam itself is – Allāh forbid – not genuine, how can I practise on its injunctions? Saying this he broke his fast. In the evening he went to visit a friend. The food for iftārī (opening the fast) was placed in front. When his friend saw him, he was overjoyed and said: “Come in, come in! Today you will make iftārī with me.” The man replied: “If you were to learn about my condition you will not tolerate speaking to me.” His friend was quite sharp and realized that the man was having some bad thoughts, so he said: “The worst thing that may have happened is that you may have become a kāfir. So listen, īmān and kufr is a matter with Allāh *taʿālā.* Our friendship continues. First join me for the iftārī. Then the next thing I want you to do first thing in the morning is to go to Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Fadl ar-Rahmān Sāhib in Ganj Murādābād.”

The man proceeded the next day. The moment Hadrat set eyes on him, he jumped from his place, went to the man, began striking him repeatedly on his chest, and said: “Tell me, what doubts do you have about Islam?” Hadrat did not give the man any chance to ask any questions. Each time he thought of some doubt, an

answer to it came to his mind. Subsequently, his heart became totally pure towards Islam and he was convinced about its authenticity and truthfulness. He then repented at the hands of Hadrat and became a man of pure heart. He did not experience any doubt or misgiving about Islam for the rest of his life.

Glory to Allāh! This is what you call blessings of the saints and the effects of their company. These luminaries are blessed with these qualities by virtue of their bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and correct affiliation with Him.

A Khān Sāhib was an attendant to Hadrat Maulānā Qāsim Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā had a lot of time for him. Whenever he received a gift, he would certainly give a portion to the Khān Sāhib. If he was not around, Hadrat Maulānā would keep his share aside for him. The two were so close that they used to bath together on Fridays [obviously with their satr covered]. The Khān Sāhib would rub Hadrat's back and Hadrat would rub his back.

One day Hadrat said to Khān Sāhib: "O Khān Sāhib! We are very good friends. It doesn't seem appropriate that my appearance and your appearance are different. I will therefore remove my beard, and you must give me a set of your clothes which I will wear. We will then go together to perform salāh." Khān Sāhib said: "Hadrat! What are you saying!? Here, I am not going to shave my beard from today, and you must give me a set of your clothes. I will wear them and we will go together for salāh." The Khān Sāhib was rectified from that day. The people realized that Hadrat had been working on him from the inside from a long time but did not say anything to him because he was waiting for the opportune moment.

These are true stories of the saints. Believe them with your heart and affirm them, and you will be successful.

Note: Glory to Allāh! These are most beautiful stories which we must listen to and convey to others. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

THE VALUE OF A BOND WITH ALLĀH (2)

Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Walī Allāh Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following couplet in *al-Qaul al-Jamīl*:

> People have discarded the fundamental work. Rather, they believe more in the subsidiary matters than they do in the fundamentals.

In other words, people are embroiled more in subsidiary matters than they are in beliefs concerning tauhīd and messenger-ship. They are more attached to the Sharīʿat than they are with Allāh *taʿālā*.

Look at what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* is saying. More people are attached to the subsidiary matters while fewer have any interest in the fundamentals. It may be very difficult for you to understand this, but he is correct in what he said. People in the past used to take as long as 20 years to rectify their salāh. Now there is no value for Dīn; this is why they write notes to us saying that their hearts are not in order. They are immersed in all types of fabricated customs and practices, yet they want to seize the rank of the auliyā'. They are foolish people; they have no intelligence at all. It is difficult to straighten the internal self. And there is no specific time-span for it. It is a matter related to Allāh *taʿālā*; so who knows better, you or Allāh?

All we can say is that you must continue doing what you have to do. It may well be that the matter will be corrected today. It is also possible that it will take a long time. Each person's capability is different. Allāh *taʿālā* alone knows who is to receive His grace and when.

A man came to a shaykh, remained with him for one week, received khilāfat and departed. Many people who were in his company for a long period of time thought to themselves that this man came just now and he has already been honoured with khilāfat!? On the other hand, we are here for years and haven't succeeded as yet? Success is in Allāh's hands. This path is not one that is inherited from one's forefathers. A person succeeds in this path on the basis of his sincerity.

The shaykh came to know of the thoughts which were going through the minds of his disciples with regard to the one who received khilāfat in just one week. He learnt of their objections. He did not say or do anything immediately. After some time he asked them to go into the forest and bring fresh moist twigs. They all presented them before the shaykh. He asked them to burn the twigs. They tried their utmost but could not get the twigs to burn. He eventually asked them: "What is the matter?" They replied: "H̱aḏrat, the twigs are fresh and moist, this is why the fire is not catching on them." They must have assumed that the shaykh does not know of such things. He asked: "O I see, so fire does not catch on fresh and moist twigs?" They replied: "Certainly not." He said: "The man to whom I conferred khilāfat was like a dry twig. All he needed was to be ignited. As for you, you are moist twigs. I have been blowing on the fire to ignite you for so long that I now have a headache. And you are just as you were when you came here."

Be pleased with every decision of the shaykh

H̱aḏrat Maulānā Thānwī *raẖimahullāh* related that a murīd complained to his shaykh that he was not deriving any benefit from him. The shaykh replied: "What must I do if you are not benefiting? Go and

strike your head against the wall.” The murīd thought that the shaykh was serious and that he does not speak in riddles and allusions. So he got up and proceeded towards a wall. A voice from the unseen said: “Are you going to allow My friend to strike his head against a wall?” This voice was heard by both, the shaykh and the murīd. The shaykh said to him: “Did you hear? Allāh *taʿālā* is referring to you as a friend, now what more do you want?”

A Hadīth in *Bukhārī Sharīf* states that Hadrat ʿUbādah ibn Sāmit *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: We pledged allegiance to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* on *manshat* and *makrah*.[1] In other words, we pledged allegiance to him over the fact that we will obey his orders irrespective of whether they are to our liking or not; and that if anyone else is given preference over us for a certain position, we will not feel offended.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* distributed some wealth on one occasion, and he did not give anything to a certain Sahābī. Another Sahābī interceded on his behalf to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: “O Rasūlullāh! He is a believer.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: “A Muslim or a believer?” He asked this question three times. He then said: “Sometimes I do not give a certain person even though I know he is eligible so that I may save him from the Hell-fire. And a sincere person is nevertheless protected by virtue of his sincerity.”

A man in Kānpūr used to frequently visit a saintly person. This man was a bit liberal and did not adhere to the Sharīʿat. Someone asked the saint: “Do you still

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[1] صحيح البخاري، الأحكام، ٩٢، باب كيف يبايع الإمام الناس، ٤٣، حديث ٧١٩٩.

accommodate him!?” He replied: “His outer self is certainly not good but his heart is sound. This is why he comes to me.” I say, this is what is known as reconciling the heart. It was a practice of the saints to treat a person kindly and with affection when they felt that such an approach will have an effect on the person.

Training methodology

A non-Muslim used to visit Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. He would fill water from a well, take a bath, and sprinkle water towards the sun. Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* would not stop him. The man was a great friend of Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Hadrat Maulānā Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was from the same family and he used to think to himself: “Why is my nānā (maternal grandfather) accommodating him in this way?” The man continued coming regularly even after the demise of Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. Although Hadrat Shāh Is-hāq Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was now in charge, he too could not stop the man. The man finally fell ill. Forty days before he fell ill, he felt an intense urge in his heart to become a Muslim. He became a Muslim and passed away after forty days.

Did you see! Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* was not unmindful of him. He was waiting for the right time. It is not far-fetched to assume that Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* must have received information from the unseen that the man will become a Muslim, and this is why he did not say anything to him.

A woman came to Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-Qādir Sāhib *rahimahullāh* and said: “Hadrat, I have a shop where I

sell hemp-leaves.[1] I want a taʿwīdh so that my business does well." Hadrat Shāh Sāhib said: "Very well." He wrote a taʿwīdh, gave it to her and said: "You must return this taʿwīdh to me once your business establishes itself."

Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said this to repulse the objections of those who said: "How can he give a taʿwīdh for something which is harām?" The woman returned the taʿwīdh after some days. Hadrat gave it to a person and asked him to read it. It contained the following words: "O Allāh! Whoever is destined to consume hemp-leaves must purchase it from this shop." All those who had been making objections felt most ashamed.

Subsequently, the woman presented two trays of sweetmeats. Hadrat indicated that it should be left in a certain place. Now the people had another whispering – they wanted to know what Shāh Sāhib is going to do with the sweetmeats. Just then two yogis came to visit him. Shāh Sāhib had laid out two straw mats outside the masjid from beforehand. He pointed to the straw mats and they sat down there. He then said to the people: "Take the two trays of sweetmeats and give them to those two yogis." They took the sweetmeats and left. When they disappeared from their sight, Shāh Sāhib said: "It was harām wealth which reached a harām place."

This was also the order of the Sharīʿat. There are countless incidents about the kashf (expositions) of the saints. It is a great thing to have faith in the genuine Sufis. Instead of remaining in the company of the saints and affirming their actions, people go there

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[1] An intoxicant similar to marijuana.

to make objections. I ask you, how is it to do this? Obviously it is not a good attitude.

An evil condition can be changed into a good one

I had a relative regarding whom our family women said that before he could pass away, he used to cry so much and so intensely as though he was a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. After he passed away I saw him in a dream. He was wearing white garments. I concluded from this that – inshā Allāh – he is to go to Paradise because the garments of the people of Paradise will be pure white. There was an ʿālim who used to help and support H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* a lot. He saw him in a dream dressed in pure white garments. Another Maulānā was seen in white garments, but they were less white than the previous person's.

We are required to win over the hearts of people. In other words, to treat them with love and affection so that they develop an inclination towards Dīn. A person's condition may be something in a certain period of his life and completely different in another period of his life. His bad habits can change to good ones.

There was a wealthy person who used to come to H̲ad̲rat [Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*]. H̲ad̲rat used to receive him very warmly. H̲ad̲rat said to us on one occasion: "You people have accepted me only now while he accepted me at a time when I had no one else." Only then did the people understand the reason for H̲ad̲rat's warmth towards the person.

H̲ad̲rat went to Lucknow on one occasion. When his assembly ended one day, someone informed him that Khān S̲āh̲ib from Kānpūr is here. H̲ad̲rat said: "It is the time of s̲alāh now. Must I perform s̲alāh or meet

Khān Sāhib?” When the Khān Sāhib heard this, he left immediately for Kānpūr. When we emerged from the masjid the next day, we saw the Khān Sāhib waiting outside. He went inside and clasped Hadrat’s feet. When the man came outside after the assembly, he said to us: “Hadrat was angry at me yesterday. I am used to it because I had to hear much more from him in the past. I am not worried about it as long as he does not expel and banish me.” I thought to myself: “Just look at this man’s faith and confidence in Hadrat! This is how a man succeeds.”

Faith [in the shaykh] is a great quality in this path. Nowadays people do not even understand what this faith and confidence is all about. If something makes rational sense to you, then your intellect will compel you to accept it. This cannot be referred to as faith and confidence. Faith and confidence mean that something does not make sense to your intelligence but you still accept it, and you think to yourself that there must be some good in it which you cannot fathom at present, and will be understood later on.

Note: Yes, if something is in total opposition of the Sharī‘at then he is not required to obey it because:

لا طاعة لمخلوق في معصية الخالق

There is to be no obedience to the creation if it entails disobedience to the Creator.

(compiler)

NOBLE THOUGHTS ABOUT ALLĀH

A Hadīth states:

أكبر الكبائر سوء الظن بالله[1]

Having bad thoughts about Allāh taʿālā is the worst of the major sins.

Another Hadīth states:

أكبر الكبائر الإشراك بالله، وقتل النفس، وعقوق الوالدين، وشهادة الزور.[2]

The worst of the major sins are: Ascribing partners with Allāh taʿālā, murder, disobedience to parents and false testimony.

Listen to one other point which you probably did not hear in these words:

أكبر الكبائر حب الدنيا[3]

Love for this world is the worst of the major sins.

Nowadays it has become a crime to speak the truth. The Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is present, but an ʿālim cannot say that love for this world is the worst of the major sins. There are many people who frequent this place, but there is probably

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٨.

[2] صحيح البخاري، الديات، ٧٨، باب ومن أحياها، حديث ٦٨٧١.

[3] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٧.

just a handful who understand what I say and who come with the correct intention, viz. for rectification. This system has been carrying on for a long time.

So many Ramaḏāns have passed but people live in Ramaḏān as they do before it. They come here as well. I say to them: After having corrupted your homes, you people come here to spread your "blessings". You already know about the corruption in your homes. You know how you corrupted them with your bad character. Each one has corrupted his house separately, and now you all assemble in a certain place. Is it possible for that place not to be corrupted? You are already corrupt, now you want to corrupt another place and become a corrupter. This is your condition, yet you think that you are righteous and you can rectify others. This is the norm with corruption. It spreads gradually in the beginning and eventually envelops the entire world – the elite and the laity.

وَاتَّقُوْا فِتْنَةً لَّا تُصِيْبَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ ظَلَمُوْا مِنْكُمْ خَاصَّةً

Fear a corruption which will not afflict the wrongdoers among you alone.[1]

Rather, it will certainly afflict both the wrongdoers and those who do not do wrong. And everyone is affected by it.

Consequently, if these people [described above] go to a madrasah, they corrupt it. If they penetrate a khānqāh, its corruption is inevitable. This is why I see corruption everywhere. There is much in-fighting everywhere, and there is no sign of noble character.

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[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 25.

There is no such a thing as righteousness and rectification. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

I quoted the following Hadīth in the beginning:

أكبر الكبائر حب الدنيا[1]

Love for this world is the worst of the major sins.

The ʿulamā' say that the reason for this is that:

حب الدنيا رأس كل خطيئة[2]

Love for the world is the basis for every sin.

Love for the world is the root of all evils and corruptions. Another reason why it is the worst of the major sins is that the world is a co-wife of the Hereafter; if you please one, the other will be displeased. The two are like the East and the West. The closer you go to one, the further away you will get from the other.

Hadrat Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh* said: "We met such people regarding whom, if you were to see, you will say that they are insane. And if they were to see you, they will say you are Shayātīn." The people used to say that the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are insane. If the people refer to the followers of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* as insane, it will not be too surprising. But we did not know what they would have said if they saw us. The statement of Hadrat Hasan Basrī *rahimahullāh* makes it clear to us that they will consider us to be Shayātīn.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٧.

[2] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٧، ص ٣٣٨، حديث ١٠٥٠١.

Worldly and Dīnī intelligentsia

Listen to one other point! When a worldly-minded person hears something strange about Dīn, he rejects it. It is the hallmark of such people to reject Dīn and people of Dīn. A Hadīth states:

أكثر أهل الجنة البله[1]

The majority of the inhabitants of Paradise will be those who were considered to be *ablah*. In other words, they were oblivious to evil while goodness was their nature.

It is a fact that those who are pure from fabrications, ruses, deception, trickery, etc. will be the people of Paradise. It is also a fact that they are the truly intelligent ones. It does not mean that those who are brainless and foolish will all be in Paradise. We learn from this explanation that the people of Paradise are those who are intelligent, bright and religious. Their hearts are totally clean, their words and actions are upright, and they are pure from plotting and scheming. People in general consider them to be stupid and foolish on account of their simplicity and honesty. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that an *ablah* person is one whose mind does not work in matters related to this world. The intellect is not enough to encompass the sciences of both this world and the Hereafter because these are two conflicting sciences. The one who directs his attention to one, then in most cases his understanding of the other will be lacking. This is why Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* explained

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٩.

three examples for this world and the Hereafter. He said that the two are like the two pans of a scale, like the East and West, or like two co-wives. If you please one, you will displease the other. Those who are sharp in matters related to this world are generally ignorant in matters related to the Hereafter. For example, medicine, accounting, philosophy and so on. These people are totally ignorant in matters of the Hereafter. Those who are experts in the intricate matters of the Hereafter are by and large ignorant of worldly sciences. The reason for this is that the intellect is not enough for both sciences. Each one is an obstacle to becoming an expert in the other. It is therefore difficult for a person to be totally proficient in worldly and Dīnī matters unless Allāh *taʿālā* has selected a person for the arrangement of both like the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who are supported by Jibraʾīl *ʿalayhis salām*. As for the rest of the people, when they become occupied with worldly matters, they lose focus on the Hereafter; and when they focus on the Hereafter, they become negligent of worldly matters. This is the meaning of the following couplet:

> It is a fantasy to find Allāh *taʿālā* and obtain of this world as well. In fact, it is impossible and insanity.

I had quoted the following Hadīth in the beginning:

أكبر الكبائر سوء الظن بالله[1]

Having bad thoughts about Allāh taʿālā is the worst of the major sins.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٧٨.

Bad thoughts include bad thoughts about one's livelihood. For example, a person's condition changes for the worse so he says: "Up to now Allāh *taʿālā* had maintained me with respect and dignity, but I now feel that He is going to change my condition for the worse." This is a major sin. In other words, it is a creedal sin after unbelief. It is referred to as the worst of the major sins because it be a prelude to kufr. The Qur'ān states:

وَذٰلِكُمْ ظَنُّكُمُ الَّذِيْ ظَنَنْتُمْ بِرَبِّكُمْ اَرْدَاكُمْ

This is that very assumption of yours which you made about your Lord. He has ruined you.[1]

It is your evil thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* which have caused you to witness this evil day of destruction. After all, Allāh *taʿālā* treats His servants according to their thoughts about Him. The prohibition of evil thoughts does not mean that we should not fear Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, just as it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Him, it is obligatory to fear His punishment and wrath. What this means is that it is unlawful to have bad thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*; this is a creedal sin which is the worst of major sins. From this we also learn that it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Him. Together with īmān, we have to believe in our hearts that it is one of the demands of īmān to have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make this duʿā':

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm Sajdah, 41: 23.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ التَّوْفِيْقَ لِمَحَآبِّكَ مِنَ الْاَعْمَالِ، وَصِدْقَ التَّوَكُّلِ عَلَيْكَ، وَحُسْنَ الظَّنِّ بِكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You for inspiration to do good actions which are liked by You, to have genuine trust in You, and to have noble thoughts about You.

A person said to me: "The time of my death is approaching. When I think about the constriction and darkness of the grave I get extremely frightened. Kindly write something in this regard." I wrote back: "Just as you heard about the constriction and darkness of the grave, mention is also made about its expansiveness and brightness. Why have you taken just one thing? There is absolute expansiveness in the grave for a true believer."

I then quoted a narration of *Iḫyā' al-ʿUlūm* which stated that a person was pardoned solely because of his noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*. The man was consoled.

The Qur'ān mentions both fear and hope with regard to Allāh *taʿālā*. We are instructed to have noble thoughts and are told that it is an act of worship. It is an internal obedience which far outweighs external obedience. The noble thoughts which we have to have with regard to our fellow believers is because of the noble thoughts which we have to have with Allāh *taʿālā*. If it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā*, it becomes essential to have noble thoughts about those who believe in Allāh *taʿālā*. Together with fear and hope, a believer has noble thoughts about Allāh's righteous servants. This is obligatory. I say that it is not only obligatory but the most obligatory of all obligations. This is based on the fact that evil thoughts are the worst of all major sins.

Thus, their opposite will be the most obligatory of all obligations.

We will only learn about Allāh's pleasure or displeasure after we die. However, noble thoughts are the means for consolation of a believer in this world. Understand this well. It is an internal action on its own. Many major things are realized by virtue of it. This is why we have to pay particular attention to develop it.

The benefits of going to a saint are not external only. Rather, its benefit is that the bond of the heart with Allāh *taʿālā* is corrected and a person acquires affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that Hadrat Imām Bukhārī *rahimahullāh* had a teacher by the name of Yahyā ibn Aktham *rahimahullāh*. When he was presented before Allāh *taʿālā* after his death, he was asked: "O you old man! Tell Me why did you do this?" He was left astounded and remained silent. He was asked again: "Why are you not talking?" When he was asked a few times, he said: "I had heard a Hadīth but now find myself in a situation different from it. I am therefore worried as to whether the text of the Hadīth is incorrect or the transmission (sanad) is wrong." He was asked: "Which Hadīth?" He then quoted the entire transmission and read the Hadīth which states that Allāh *taʿālā* feels shy [to punish] Muslims who have turned grey.[1] Allāh *taʿālā* said: "The transmission is correct, all the narrators are okay, and the Hadīth too is authentic. Go, I have pardoned you on account of it."

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[1] *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 14, p. 206.

In short, it is obligatory to have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* in all matters – Dīnī and worldly. We must have noble thoughts about ourselves and our children as well – that Allāh *taʿālā* will not allow them to be wasted. Let it not be that we have noble thoughts in Dīnī matters only and not in worldly matters. This is not right. We must have noble thoughts about Allāh *taʿālā* in worldly matters and about our sustenance as well. We must think that whatever He decrees will be for the better. Our good lies in this alone.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to have noble thoughts. Āmīn.

RECTIFY YOUR INTENTION AND YOU WILL REACH ALLĀH

In his *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*, Hadrat Shāh ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Sāhib Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* quotes a statement of Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

In his commentary to Sūrah ash-Shams, Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says that Allāh *taʿālā* took an oath by the day and by the night as well. We learn from this that the times and moments of casualness and rest also contain sanctity. This is because an oath is taken in the name of something which is great and respected. Shāh Sāhib's words in this regard read as follows:

> We learn from here that moments of casualness and rest also contain sanctity because they help a person for future spiritual practices and acts of obedience. Furthermore, they are means for those acts of worship which are related to the rights of fellow humans. Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* says that he is hopeful of reward from his sleep just as he is hopeful of it from tahajjud salāh. This is because when the rights of the Creator are fulfilled through tahajjud salāh, the rights of the self are fulfilled from sleeping. Both these rights have been made obligatory by Allāh *taʿālā* Himself. Yes, the rest which does not aid a person in obedience to Allāh *taʿālā*, which is not permitted by the

> Sharīʿat and is not in compliance with Allāh's orders certainly has no sanctity in Allāh's sight. Instead, it is absolutely harām.[1]

The gist of what Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said is that times of casualness and rest have two statuses. (1) Tiredness and fatigue are removed, and they help a person for future devotional practices. They become means for the fulfilment of acts of worship which are related to the rights of fellow humans. When viewed in this manner, they [times of casualness and rest] are also sanctified and blessed. (2) However, if this casualness does not help a person for acts of obedience, it is not in compliance to an order of the Sharīʿat, and it is not done with the intention of carrying out Allāh's order; then it carries no weight whatsoever. Instead, it is harām.

With regard to one type of rest Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that it is sanctified. This will only be when Allāh's orders are carried out in both cases. If this is the case, then these orders will be worthy of sanctity just like our body parts when they carry out Allāh's orders and abstain from His prohibitions. A Sufi rightly said:

> I am proud of my eyes because it beheld Your beauty. I am falling at my own feet because they have reached Your alley. I kiss my hand a thousand times because they held Your side and drew me towards You.

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[1] *Tafsīr ʿAzīzī*, p. 189 – in the commentary to Sūrah ash-Shams.

Look at how these couplets mention the sanctity of these external body parts. This is because the poet has realized that we reach Allāh *taʿālā* through them. We can say that they have two statuses also. (1) If they disobey their Master, they have no sanctity and no value at all. (2) If they obey their Master, they become worthy of sanctity and respect. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say: "When I apply oil to my head, I think to myself that my head is an official machine whose protection is our responsibility, and that it is a trust given to us by Allāh *taʿālā*. If we do not value it and let it go to waste, we will be taken to task."

The same can be said of our time. If it is spent in sin – that is, it does not help us toward obedience, it is not line with the Sharīʿat, and not spent with the intention of carrying Allāh's orders – then it has no sanctity. If it is spent in obedience or helps one towards obedience, and is a means for fulfilling the rights of fellow humans, then it is sanctified and worthy of respect. It is in this sense that H̲ad̲rat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* said:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud s̲alāh to be a source of reward.

Shāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* explains the reason for this by saying that if tahajjud s̲alāh entails fulfilling the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* then sleeping entails fulfilling the rights of the self. And these two rights – the right of Allāh *taʿālā* and the right of the servant – have been made obligatory by Allāh *taʿālā* making them such. Furthermore, just as Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered us to suppress the self when it is not subservient to the Sharīʿat, he ordered us to fulfil its

rights like he ordered us to fulfil the other rights of fellow humans. Fulfilling the rights of fellow humans includes fulfilling the rights of one's own self. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* said:

وَإِنَّ لِنَفْسِكَ عَلَيْكَ حَقًّا[1]

Your self also has a right over you.

Since it is obligatory to fulfil the rights of both, who are you to differentiate between the two? This is what is known as deviation and misguidance. Both are equally Allāh's orders. How, then, can you choose which one to carry out and which one to leave out? How can you allow your views to interfere? Once there is an explicit text with regard to a certain ruling, there remains no room for any person's view or opinion. Thus, we see many people advising, not themselves but others, by saying to them that there is no need to fulfil the rights of the self. A poet rightly said:

> Every person is ever ready to advise others, but there are very few in the world who advise their own selves.

They learn nothing from the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh but they are ready to advise them and voice their opinions before them. They only want to be physically close to them and consider this to be the fundamental objective. They do not want to learn anything from them.

I believe that their incorrect beliefs have something to do with this. They feel that the closer they get physically to the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh, the happier they will be with them and they ['ulamā' and

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[1] أبو داؤد، كتاب التطوع، حديث ١٣٦٩.

mashā'ikh] will think that they are their true followers and associates. By virtue of their happiness with us, they will absolve us of Dīn itself. On the other hand, if their objective was to practise, they would really succeed.

Take the moments of casualness and rest as an example. They appear to be blameworthy. The aspect of praiseworthiness and goodness is not understood at first glance. Yet, look at how Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* explained it. Because it prepares man for future devotional practices and worship, and removes tiredness and fatigue from him, taking a rest is not a worldly activity but a Dīnī one. It is not harām, but wājib. If you do not take a rest you will not be able to fulfil the rights of the creation. As for casualness, it is not totally harām. Rather, if it is a prelude to the fulfilment of an obligation, it will be wājib to choose it.

The need for knowledge of Dīn

There is nothing but benefit for a man who has knowledge of Dīn, and there is nothing but loss for the one who is ignorant of it. If a person goes to the saints and acquires no knowledge and understanding, then this is a very rueful situation. Look at what an excellent statement made by Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

By just this one statement, this great Sahābī opened an entire chapter of knowledge. He says that he hopes for reward even in sleeping even though it is a time of total heedlessness. If such a heedlessness-causing

action can become a source of reward, why will rewards not be accrued from Allāh *taʿālā* through other means in which there is less heedlessness, e.g. eating. It is also a cause of rest and casualness. But if man has a correct intention when eating, he can accrue rewards. When he commences eating he says *Bismillāhir Rah̲mānir Rah̲īm*. When he completes eating, he says:

اَلْحَمْدُ لِلّٰهِ الَّذِيْ اَطْعَمَنَا وَسَقَانَا وَجَعَلَنَا مُسْلِمِيْنَ

All praise is due to Allāh taʿālā who feds us, gave us to drink and made us Muslims.

All this entails Allāh's remembrance; not negligence. Thus, if a person eats in order to gain strength to carry out acts of worship, his eating will certainly be a source of reward for him. But those who made their sleeping and eating acts of worship were people who were on a different level. Our level is such that even our acts of worship are not in order, and our Dīnī activities have become like worldly activities. Those people turned their moments of casualness into acts of worship, while we turned our worship into negligence. If the 'ulamā' did not explain to us, we would have considered the only worship to be the one in which Allāh's rights are fulfilled. We would have given no rank of worship to the fulfilment of rights of fellow humans. Whereas the latter is also worship. In fact, it surpasses the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* in certain situations. Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* says:

> If I see a blind man walking towards a well
> and I remain silent (and do not catch him
> by his hand), I will be committing a sin.

Included under this general rule is that if a person is occupied in an act of obedience and he comes to know

of a person who wants to fall into destruction, it will be necessary to cast aside that act of obedience and go to rescue that man. I have personally witnessed this when I was in the company of Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. All these aspects of Dīn were practised there. Listen to one example.

An incident related to Hadrat Thānwī

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* had completed the fard salāh and was occupied in performing the Sunnat salāh. Suddenly a man came rushing to the masjid, stood at the entrance, and shouted: "Bājī[1] has fallen from the upper storey." The moment Hadrat heard this, he broke his salāh, rushed to his house and rendered whatever help was needed. If it was us, we would have first discussed the matter to see what course of action we should follow. If not, we would have at least completed our salāh first. However, Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was fully proficient with the Sharīʿat and he understood the limits very well. He therefore concluded that this is not the time for worship. Rather, another right related to the creation takes precedence at present, and it is wājib to fulfil it immediately. Allāh *taʿālā* is not in need of our worship, but a special female servant of Allāh *taʿālā* is need of our help. This is why he rushed without any delay.

From this incident I am showing you that this is also Dīn. In fact, it is an essential part of Dīn which we have discarded. We are frequenting the mashā'ikh for years and years, yet we are not filling this vacuum in our Dīn. Listen further:

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[1] Hadrat Thānwī's senior wife [he had two wives] was referred to as Bājī Sāhibah.

Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* said that if you are hungry and the food is present, and it is the time of salāh; then eat first and then perform your salāh. Look at the beautiful proof which he furnished for this ruling. He said that it is far better for our entire meal to be turned into salāh then for our entire salāh to be turned into a meal. What this means is that throughout his meal, the person will be thinking that he has to perform his salāh. This is far better than the case where he performs his salāh while thinking all the time that he is going to eat just now.

A person said to his friends: "Come, let's perform our salāh and then we can eat with tranquillity." Another person said: "Tranquillity is in salāh or in food? Come, let's eat first and then perform salāh with tranquillity."

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* generally understood the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* but did not give so much of importance to their selves. However, once they learnt about Rasūlullāh's instructions in this regard, they used to give full attention to it. A Hadīth relates the story of a Sahābiyah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* who used to keep fast continuously and spend the entire night in worship. She had a rope suspended from the ceiling which she used to hold on to in order to keep her from falling asleep. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* heard about it, he disapproved of her action and said:

إن لأهلك عليك حقًّا، وإن لضيفك عليك حقا، وإن لنفسك عليك حقا

Your family has a right over you, your guest has a right over you, and your own self has a right over you.

Thus, we have to be obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*; and at the same time we have to spend time with our wives and children, and we have to spend some time for the hospitality and comfort of our guests. Allāh *taʿālā* loves these actions and there is reward for them if they are carried out within the limits of the Sharīʿat. To this point you learnt about the rewards in sleeping and eating. Now listen to a story about clothing.

People were performing s̲alāh when it started to rain heavily. Due to their concern for their clothes getting wet, they completed their s̲alāh quickly and ran inside. One person who was wearing very expensive clothing continued with his s̲alāh with absolute calm and humility. His clothes got wet but he did not bother about it. He then went home and wore another set of clothing which was just as expensive. H̲ad̲rat Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* said: "Such a person has a right to beautification and it is permissible for him to beautify himself because he did not give precedence to his clothes over s̲alāh. He maintained the greatness and honour of s̲alāh, and did not bother in the least about his clothes. When worldly things have not embedded themselves in a person's heart, and beautification does not keep him occupied from Allāh *taʿālā*, then there is no harm in beautification for such a person."

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā *rah̲imahullāh* understood this from the person's condition. Although he had chosen to beautify and embellish himself, his heart was free from such attachments, and beautification is not totally forbidden by the Sharīʿat. Rather, it is prohibited when it shifts his heart from Allāh *taʿālā* and gets him occupied with itself. If a person opts for beautification and adornment while remaining within the limits of the Sharīʿat then there is no harm in that.

In fact, let alone there being any harm, we learn from the Hadīth that if Allāh *taʿālā* blessed a person with wealth and worldly bounties, then gratitude to Allāh *taʿālā* demands that he shows the effects of those bounties so that the poor may come to know of his status and they may be able to present their needs to him. Furthermore, the Qur'ān itself permits good food, good clothes and different types of adornment. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللهِ الَّتِيْ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ ؕ قُلْ هِيَ لِلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا فِي الْحَيٰوةِ الدُّنْيَا خَالِصَةً يَّوْمَ الْقِيٰمَةِ.

Say: "Who has forbidden the beauty of Allāh which He created for His servants, and the good things of food?" Say: "These bounties are originally for the believers in this world, exclusively for them on the day of Resurrection."[1]

The permissibility of good food and clothes

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that it is proven from this verse that there is fundamental permissibility in having good clothes, good food and other types of adornment. Hadrat Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn *rahimahullāh* bought a sheet for 50 dīnārs (gold coins), wore it and then gave it in charity. He did not consider anything wrong in doing this on the basis of this verse. When Hadrat ʿAlī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* sent Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* towards the Khawārij, he wore most expensive clothes, applied the best perfume, and travelled on the best conveyance. They said to him: "O Ibn ʿAbbās! You are the best of people, how come you are wearing the

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[1] Sūrah al-Aʿrāf, 7: 32.

garments of tyrants and riding their type of conveyance?" He responded by reading this verse to them:

قُلْ مَنْ حَرَّمَ زِيْنَةَ اللهِ الَّتِيْ أَخْرَجَ لِعِبَادِهِ وَالطَّيِّبٰتِ مِنَ الرِّزْقِ

Say: "Who has forbidden the beauty of Allāh which He created for His servants, and the good things of food?"

It is related that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* emerged from his house one day while he was wearing a sheet whose price was 1 000 dirhams (silver coins).

Hadrat Imām Abū Hanīfah *rahimahullāh* would sometimes wear a sheet whose value used to be 400 dīnārs and he used to order his companions to dress in a similar manner. Imām Muhammad *rahimahullāh* used to wear very expensive clothes and say: "I dress up like this so that my wives and slave-women do not look at anyone else." The jurists state that beautification is mustahab (desirable) because Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that when Allāh *taʿālā* confers His favours on a servant, He likes to see the effects of those favours.[1] I say, this is how gratitude is shown for those favours.

We learn from the above statements of the ʿulamā' that clothing is the fundamental way of adornment and it is a favour of Allāh *taʿālā*. However, it is necessary to rectify the evil self. If it is rectified, there is no harm in wearing such clothes. During the rule of Shāh Jahān, the people asked if it was permissible for the king to wear silk. The ʿulamā' of the time passed a fatwā that it was permissible for him. Mullā Jīyūn

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٢٥، ص ٢٢٧، حديث ١٥٨٩٢.

ra<u>h</u>imahullāh was a teacher of ʿĀlamgīr [King Aurangzeb] *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*. Someone asked him about this fatwā. He replied: "I will give you the answer on Friday in the jāmiʿ masjid. You must ask me the question there." Subsequently, when the <u>s</u>alāh was performed – and the masjid was filled to capacity, and Shāh Jahān was also present – the person posed this question to Mullā Jīyūn: "The ʿulamā' say that it is permissible for the king to wear silk. What do you have to say in this regard?" He replied: "The one who issued the fatwā (the muftī) and the one who asked for it are both kāfirs." What he meant was that it is absolutely <u>h</u>arām and its prohibition is established from explicit texts. Therefore, the one who said that it is permissible is a kāfir, and the one who knowingly asked the question is also a kāfir."

Shāh Jahān heard this conversation but did not say anything in the masjid. When he returned to his palace he issued an order for the execution of Mullā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*. The latter was informed that the king has ordered that he be executed. He said: "Very well. Bring me a jug of water so that I could perform wu<u>d</u>ū' and get ready, because a <u>H</u>adīth states:

اَلْوُضُوْءُ سِلَاحُ الْمُؤْمِنِ

Wu<u>d</u>ū' is the weapon of a believer.

The king was informed that Mullā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib is getting ready and performing wu<u>d</u>ū'. Shāh Jahān got frightened (he did have faith in Mullā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib and realized that if he curses him, he will lose his entire kingdom). He consulted the people with regard to what he should do and how Mullā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib could be won over. When ʿĀlamgīr heard this, he came forward and said: "O father! Give me the royal garment and I will go to Mullā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib." He took the royal garment and

presented himself before Mullā S̲āh̲ib. The latter was, after all, his teacher and liked him a lot. He presented the royal garment to him and said: "My father sent this to you." Mullā S̲āh̲ib concluded that this was an expression of regret. This is how a royal pardon used to be expressed. He accepted.

Be that as it may, I was saying to you that there are limits for clothing as well. They must not be h̲arām according to the Sharī'at, they must not smack of pride, and they must not cause a person to become famous because of them. If these limits are considered, a person may wear what he likes. These limits apply to food as well. That is, they must not be h̲arām, they must not be obtained through h̲arām earnings and they must not amount to extravagance and wastage. In such a case they will be permissible.

H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* related to us that a man was cleaning his shoes with his shawl. It was an expensive shawl yet he was using it to clean his shoes. Someone asked him in astonishment: "What are you doing!?" He replied: "The shawl was bought with my father's money while the shoes were bought with my money." In other words, he received the shawl for free as inheritance, this is why he did not value it. On the other hand, he bought the shoes with his hard-earned money, so he valued them. I say to you, do not do that. It is against the teachings of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*, and amounts to ungratefulness. Maintain each thing within its limits.

Nowadays I see people either reading the newspaper first thing in the morning or polishing their shoes. They will rub them intensely to bring out a shine. They are so worried about shining their shoes but not bothered in the least to check whether their hearts are

polished or not. There is no constraint in Dīn, but Dīn is obtained through learning. However, if it is not taught or those who teach the original Dīn are no longer present, then the masses will obviously not be able to learn it on their own. Dīn is learnt solely from the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh. But the situation today is that people go to extremes in praising the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh, and getting them to pardon them from practising on Dīn. No sooner a scholar goes to a place and people gain control over him through their false praises, his mouth becomes shut and he cannot reprimand them for any defect in them. Consequently, rectification comes to an end.

Many mashā'ikh were spoilt by the praises of their murīds

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* related a story in his *Mathnawī*: A boy said to his fellow classmates: "Today we will have to convince the teacher to give us early leave." He said to them: "I've got a plan, you must support it. I will go and tell the teacher: 'Hadrat, you appear to be sick today.' He will scold me by saying: 'Go and learn, you want to get early leave!' I will return to my place and start learning. One of you must then go and tell him the same thing. Then a third one and then a fourth one. All of us will have to do this. You will see, he will fall ill and give us early leave."

The boys did as planned. The initiator of the scheme went first and said to the teacher: "Hadrat, you appear to be sick today." He replied: "Certainly not. I am feeling very well. Go and sit down and learn your work." The second boy went and said the same thing. The teacher scolded him but his tone was a bit softer. The third boy went, the teacher scolded him and chased him away as well, but his tone was softer than with the first two. In this way, all the boys went and

said the same thing. The teacher eventually began gasping for breath and thought to himself that he is certainly sick. When he went home, his wife asked in surprise: “How come you returned so quickly today?” He replied: “Woe to you! All the boys are saying that I am sick, while you are asking me why I returned so early. You want me to die so that you can get a new husband.” On seeing his anger, the wife called her neighbours and said: “Look at him, see what has happened to him. He was very well when he woke up in the morning. He was very well when he left for madrasah. Now he is saying that he is sick. To me he seems to be looking well. Tell me what do you think because when I am saying it to him he is getting angry at me.”

I heard this story from H̲ad̲rat Maulānā *rah̲imahullāh* and it is related in the *Mathnawī*. The reason for relating it to you today is to show you how the masses have made the mashā’ikh sick. They constantly praise and applaud the mashā’ikh, and consequently they have fallen into deception. They are immersed in love for wealth and position. Whereas it is essential for the mashā’ikh to supervise their carnal selves all the time and check that they are not getting spoilt due to intermingling with people, and not taking a bad influence from them.

Rectificational points from Khānqāh Thānah Bhawan

The mashā’ikh check on their own selves just as they see to the rectification of others. An ‘ālim was delivering a lecture in a certain place but stopped when another ‘ālim walked in. Some people said to him: “H̲ad̲rat, this was an opportune time to continue talking. You were speaking on excellent themes which that other Maulwī S̲āh̲ib would have heard.” The ‘ālim replied: “The same thought crossed my mind as well,

but then I thought to myself that up to now, my lecture was for Allāh's pleasure; and now it will be for the sake of the Maulwī S̲āh̲ib."

He did not want his Dīnī work to be adulterated by anything or anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, this is why he stopped his lecture. I heard these things from H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*. He explained them to me this is why I am relating them to you. I did not learn these things in the madrasah but by going to the khānqāh of Thānah Bhawan. If we don't teach these things to the people and do not popularize them, we too will retrogress. The 'ulamā' of the past had established a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh forbid, they were not negligent and heedless. They fully understood this world and its reality. Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* very rightly said:

> What does this world entail? It entails becoming unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā*. Beautiful clothes, gold, silver, a wife and children do not make one worldly.

Look at how clear the 'ulamā' made this issue. Just as the times of casualness and rest are of two types – one obligatory and the other unlawful – in like manner Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* is saying that the world entails becoming unmindful. Wealth and possessions are not the world. It is not necessary that a person who has a lot of wealth and possessions is a worldly person. In like manner, a person who has no wealth and possessions is not necessarily a non-worldly person. It can well happen that a person is extremely wealthy but he does not have the slightest love for wealth in his heart. In fact, man is not required to be totally devoid of love for wealth in his heart.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā *rah̲imahullāh* spoke on this subject in one of his lectures in such a manner that the

audience was overjoyed. He said that the following is stated in the Qur'ān:

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَآؤُكُمْ وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيْرَتُكُمْ وَأَمْوَالُ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوْهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ كَسَادَهَا وَمَسٰكِنُ تَرْضَوْنَهَآ أَحَبَّ إِلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ اللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِيْ سَبِيْلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوْا حَتّٰى يَأْتِيَ اللّٰهُ بِأَمْرِهِ ط وَاللّٰهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفٰسِقِيْنَ.

Say: If your fathers, sons, brothers, wives, family, the wealth which you have acquired, the business whose closure you fear, and the homes which you love are more beloved to you than Allāh and His Messenger and fighting in His path, then wait till Allāh sends His command. Allāh does not guide the disobedient people.[1]

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* said: We learn from this verse that we are prohibited from loving these things more, but we are not prohibited from loving them in themselves.

Bearing in mind that we are not prohibited from loving wealth, if a person loves it so that he could spend it in places and on occasions which would earn Allāh's pleasure, then there can be doubt about the nobility of his intention.

A person went to meet a saint. When he reached his house and saw the guards and doormen there, he thought to himself that this is a wealthy man; he is not a saint. He read the following couplet and left:

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 24.

> A person who loves this world cannot be a man of Allāh.

The saint heard him saying this. In the meantime, the man went to a masjid. He was quite tired, so he fell asleep. He saw a dream in which the field of Resurrection was before him and the reckoning of people was taking place. He relates: "I was also apprehended for certain rights. A demand was made to me but I had nothing with which I could fulfil it. Just then I saw a conveyance with that saint who stopped by me and asked: 'What is the matter, why is this man restrained?' The claimant mentioned his demand. The saint said: 'Take the amount [which he is owing you] from me and release him; he is my man.' My eyes then opened. I became very worried and realized that my wellness lies with that saint. I was most disrespectful to him. I ought to go and seek his pardon. I went and presented myself to him and requested him to accept my pledge of bayʿat. He replied: 'The bayʿat will come later on, first read that couplet to me which you had read.' I said: 'Hadrat, please forgive me for my audaciousness, I was most disrespectful.' He said: 'No, I am ordering you to quote that couplet to me.' I said: 'I had said:

> A person who loves this world cannot be a man of Allāh.

He said: 'You are right. Now join the following to it:

> If he does have wealth, he has it for his friend.

If the saint did not own worldly things, how would he have released the man [when he was restrained as per his account in the dream]?

Hadrat Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says:

> If your heart constantly wanders towards something, then even if you are in solitude you will not find any purity in your heart. This solitude is devoid of benefit for you. If you have wealth, authority, a farm, business and whatever else; but your heart is occupied with Allāh *taʿālā* and attached to Him, then despite all these preoccupations, you are really in solitude.

These couplets are considered to be most excellent. This was the exact condition of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Despite being everything, they were in solitude. They were manifestations of the saying: Solitude in public.

Do not be quick to judge anyone

A saint was going to the market place. He saw a trader at a shop. Through his insightful [spiritual] gaze, he saw that the man was engaging in business amounting to thousands and thousands, but his heart was not unmindful of Allāh *taʿālā* for even a single moment. Just look! A man is in the market place, yet this is the level of his connection with Allāh *taʿālā*! This is what you call solitude in public. It is far better than the solitude which is in name – where a person appears to be in solitude while his heart is wandering everywhere. Another is where a person is intermingling with people, engaging in business, people assume him to be a worldly person, while he is connected to Allāh *taʿālā*. This is why we must not be hasty in making objections against anyone and being judgemental towards them. It may well be that you have a certain view about a person by looking at his external self while it is completely different to his internal self.

Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* stood on the pulpit to deliver a sermon. He said: "O people! Listen and obey." A man stood up and said: "I will neither listen nor obey." The man had said this to Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* himself, this is why he was not offended. Instead, he asked him: "Brother, what is the matter? Why will you not listen?" The man said: "When the shawls from the booty were distributed, you gave one to each Muslim. Why did you take two for yourself?" Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked: "Is that the only objection?" Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* then turned to his son, ʿAbdullāh *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and said: "You reply to him." He said: "My father also received just one shawl. As for the second shawl which is on his body, it belongs to me. It was the time of salāh and he had nothing else to wear, so I gave him my shawl." The man was satisfied with the answer and said: "You may deliver your sermon; we will hear and obey."

There was a saint in Delhi who would constantly say: "You are not my God and I am not Your servant. Why, then, should I obey you?" People used to hear him saying this, curse him and proceed on their way. One day a person took the courage to go and ask him. He said: "Hadrat, what is the meaning of what you say?" He replied: "May Allāh reward you. From the entire population of Delhi, you are the only one who came forward to ask me its meaning. Listen! The fact is that my carnal self demands me to fulfil certain desires, so I address it and say: 'I am not your servant and you are not my God. Why, then, should I obey you?' Now tell me, is there anything wrong in what I am saying? People do not understand and they do not even ask me. All they do is curse me and proceed on their way."

I am relating this incident to prove the point that we must not be hasty in judging anyone. Sometimes when a person expresses an opinion about another, then it is actually his own condition. He assumes others to be as he is.

I heard this from Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and also read it in *Bahjah an-Nufūs* – a commentary of *Bukhārī Sharīf* – that a person went to a saint to traverse the path of Sufism. The saint instructed him to go into solitude for a few days and to remain there. The saint then went to him and asked: "Tell me, how do you view me?" The man replied: "Like a pig." The saint said: "You are right." The saint left the man in solitude. (If it was in our times, the saint will get offended and expel the person from the khānqāh. But that saint knew the reason for saying this. This is why he left the man to strive further). He went back after a few days and asked the man: "How do you view me now?" The man said: "Like a dog." The saint asked him to remain in solitude in the room. He went to him again after a few days and posed the same question. The man said something else. The saint continued in this manner, and on each occasion the man would give a different reply. Eventually he said: "You appear like a 14th moon." The saint said: "You are right. I was like this from the very first day. All these changes were taking place within you. You were seeing me as you yourself were. Now that you yourself have become a full moon, you are seeing me like that as well."

We learn from this that when a person is on a level of excellence himself, only then does he recognize others. As long as he is deficient, he continues raising objections against men of excellence.

The punishment for audaciousness

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* was a qu<u>t</u>b of his time. He used to listen to samāʿ. An ʿālim who lived in a nearby town objected to this action of the Shaykh. When the people of his town used to go to the Shaykh and return, he would ask them: "How is your dancing shaykh?" The people would feel offended but they exercised patience. One day someone said to the Shaykh: "<u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat, we have a Maulānā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib who says this about you" Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: "Next time he asks you, you must say to him: 'He dances and he also makes others to dance.'"

When the people returned, the Maulānā <u>S</u>ā<u>h</u>ib – as was his habit – asked the same question: "How is your dancing shaykh?" Someone replied: "He dances and he also makes others to dance." The moment he heard this, he went into a trance-like condition, and went dancing towards Gangoh. When people saw him on the way wearing his overcoat and turban, and dancing, they realized that he must have said something about the Shaykh who in turn did something to him. He reached Gangoh in the same manner, presented himself before the Shaykh and sought his pardon. <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: "First tell me why you are dancing?" He replied: "Do you think I am dancing on my own accord? Someone is making me dance; this is why I am dancing." The Shaykh *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* said: "In the same way, we do not dance of our own accord. When someone makes us dance, we dance."

I am relating these stories of the saints so that you may become fully aware of the abhorrence and wretchedness of rejection and objection. And so that you may understand well that the statement of

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh*: "A rejecter does not reach any rank. He achieves nothing except disgrace and humiliation" is absolutely correct. To this day, no one was ever successful through rejection and objection. Rather, anyone who achieved anything did so on account of showing respect.

Three people went to a saint. One of them was a senior saint himself. On the way, the three began speaking about what their objective was on going to the saint. One said: "I am going to acquire of the world. I will ask Hadrat to make duʿā' that I receive of the world." The second one said: "I am going to pose a few academic questions to Hadrat and see what answers he gives." The senior saint said: "I am neither going to acquire the world nor am I going to pose any academic questions to him. Rather, he is a saint and I am going with the intention of meeting a man of Allāh *taʿālā*."

When they eventually reached and met the saint, he said to the one who came with a worldly motive: "I see gold and silver bubbling from under your feet." He said to the one who intended posing academic questions: "Listen, this is your question and here is the answer for it. This is your next question and here is the answer for it." In this way, without the person even posing any question, the saint listed all the questions which he had in his mind and gave answers to them. The saint then said to him: "You will not have a good end." Subsequently, it happened as foretold by the saint. When he passed away and the people turned his face towards the qiblah, it turned in the other direction. The saint said to the saint who came to visit him: "I see a time coming when you will be sitting on the pulpit of the jāmiʿ masjid of Baghdad, and you will be saying: 'My feet are on the necks of all

the auliyā'.' But they will all say: 'Rather, it is our heads which are on your eyes.'"

Did you see the punishment for showing disrespect. The mashā'ikh say with regard to respect:

> Respect is a crown of Allāh's special kindness. Place it on your head and go wherever you want.

I feel that the reason why people are disrespectful towards the mashā'ikh is that they haven't recognized them. Another reason is that they want to view them and the things associated to them through their own views and opinions.

A statement of 'Allāmah Balyāwī

A person said something about me in the presence of Hadrat 'Allāmah Ibrāhīm Sāhib Balyāwī *rahimahullāh*. The 'Allāmah reprimanded the man severely and said: "You want to recognize him through your own views and opinions. Of what value are your views and opinions? We know him very well and these are our thoughts about him." The 'Allāmah then uttered a few words in my praise. I say, if you want to truly recognize a person, acquire some light in your heart. If the heart is filled with blackness, obviously it will see nothing but blackness. If you acquire and develop some light, you will even see the 'Arsh (the Grand Throne of Allāh *ta'ālā*). At present there is nothing in your heart, yet you want to raise objections against the seniors! Do you know how you will acquire this light in your heart? By remaining in the company of those very same saints. Those who remain in their company with full sincerity become most respectful and sensible.

There was an attendant with Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* who used to think of such things which used to leave us astounded. The fact of the matter is that when there is sincerity in the heart, a person develops sound understanding and the ability to say and do the correct thing for each occasion.

A few special guests came to meet Hadrat *rahimahullāh* but it was not the time to meet him. This attendant rushed to his own house and asked his wife to prepare a meal quickly for the guests who had just arrived. He then went to Hadrat *rahimahullāh* and informed him that he has already made the food arrangements for the guests. The food will be served from inside Hadrat's house. It was a most appropriate arrangement and brought immense comfort to Hadrat's family. Hadrat *rahimahullāh* was therefore most pleased by his arrangement and said: "May Allāh *taʿālā* reward you well." I feel that this attendant must have achieved his objective [Allāh's pleasure and Paradise] through this duʿā' of Hadrat *rahimahullāh*.

When it was the day of ʿīd, the same attendant went to Hadrat's house and said to him: "Hadrat I want some ʿīdī."[1] Immediately thereafter he added: "Hadrat, I don't want any money or sweetmeats. I want something else." Hadrat *rahimahullāh* smiled at him. He brought joy to Hadrat *rahimahullāh* in this way.

If a person lives in the company of saints or meets them, then if he cannot acquire any spiritual treasure from them, he should at least bring joy to them and take their duʿā's. He must never take their curses. He must correct his beliefs about them. He must not steal

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[1] A gift which is given on the day of ʿīd.

from them. When a person does not have correct beliefs about them, he steals from them.

Risālah Qushayrīyyah contains a story about a man who suspended a bird over an oven (this was probably how they grilled a whole bird). He then went to meet a saint. His intention was to meet him and return home for supper. Incidentally, the saint said to him: "I would like you stay over tonight." But the man's heart was attached to the bird which was waiting suspended for him, so he offered some excuse and went home. He asked his attendant to bring his supper, and she presented the bird to him. He hadn't started eating as yet when a dog entered and snatched the bird away. He rued over the fact that he had made an excuse to his shaykh for the sake of this bird, and now he did not get the bird also. He then thought to himself that never mind, he will eat the gravy in which the bird was cooked. His maid happened to walk buy and mistakenly toppled the bowl containing the gravy. Now the man was deprived of everything. He went to the shaykh the next morning. The moment the latter set eyes on him, he said:

من لم يحفظ قلوب المشائخ سلّط عليه كلب يؤذيه

When a person does not preserve the hearts of the mashā'ikh, a dog is empowered over him which then harms him.

The saint came to know through kashf (exposition) that the man did not remain with him last night for this reason, and this is what happened to him.

There are many stories of this nature about the saints. We learn from them that it is most essential to keep them happy and to show respect to them. It is not permissible to make objections against them and to

reject them. This is a cause of severe loss and deprivation. H̲ad̲rat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rah̲imahullāh* said: "A rejecter does not reach any rank. He achieves nothing except disgrace and humiliation."

The author of *ʿAwārif* states:

من أنكرهم ضل واعتدى

The one who rejects them is astray and has transgressed the limit.

As for the one who believes and affirms them, even though he may not reach their rank, there is hope that his affirmation coupled with remaining in their company will convey him to the level of the Ahlullāh.

I have spoken quite a bit about showing respect to the saints. Before that I was saying to you that it is permissible to eat good foods and wear good clothes provided it is within the limits of the Sharīʿat. The saints also did this, but only when the carnal self was freed from delights and pleasures. The story of H̲ad̲rat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rah̲imahullāh* is well known. A woman handed over her son to him so that H̲ad̲rat could train and educate him. The woman went to visit her son one day and saw him sitting in a room eating chickpeas. Then she looked at the Shaykh and saw him eating chicken and rice. The woman was quite disappointed by this scene and said: "You are eating chicken and rice while my son has to chew on chickpeas!?" The Shaykh gathered the bones of the chicken immediately and said to them: "Stand up by the order of Allāh." The chicken came to life and ran out. He turned to the woman and said: "When your son reaches this rank, he will eat chicken and rice. Until that time, he will have to eat chickpeas."

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says in this regard:

> It is permissible for an expert shaykh to explain the fine points of Sufism and eat exotic foods. You are not an expert, so you must not eat and you must keep your mouth shut.

Talking about that chicken which was brought to life made me think of another incident. A saint was a guest at someone's house. The host said to his wife: "Such and such saint is in the area. Slaughter a fowl and we will invite him." The wife was not too happy about slaughtering the fowl but she did it and the meal was presented to the saint. He learnt through kashf that the man's wife was not happy about slaughtering the fowl. He directed his mouth towards the food and blew onto it. All the pieces of chicken came together, became a fowl which then made a sound and went into the house. The host was quite perturbed when he saw this and realized that his wife's bad intention was exposed to the saint. The saint too realized the man's embarrassment so he said: "The bread can be eaten with the gravy alone."

This is the situation with women – they can embarrass whoever they want. When a person decides to accept an invitation, he must first enquire about the nature and temperament of the people of that house.

I related these incidents to you while saying to you that when a person recognizes the saints as he ought to, he becomes very perceptive, considerate and fearful. And as long as he does not recognize them, then many impudent and disrespectful acts are committed against them.

I had commenced this talk with the following statement of Hadrat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*:

إِنِّيْ لَأَحْتَسِبُ نَوْمَتِيْ كَمَا أَحْتَسِبُ قَوْمَتِيْ

I consider my sleep to be a source of reward just as I consider my tahajjud salāh to be a source of reward.

The points which Hadrat Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* derived from this statement are most excellent. Through their blessings, I will add one more point. When he set right his intention for night worship and did it solely for Allāh *taʿālā*, will his intention not have an effect on his sleep? In other words, will his sleep not become for Allāh's sake? It most certainly will. Not only just one sleep, it will also have an effect on his eating. In other words, just as he considered reward in his tahajjud salāh, he and people like him consider a reward in their eating and in the fulfilment of all other human needs. This is what is known as *wusūl* (reaching Allāh *taʿālā*).

I think that the Sufis came to believe in the rank of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* from this because they are the ones who are referred to as *wāsil ilallāh* (the one who has reached Allāh *taʿālā*) and *ahlullāh*. Those whose external and internal selves, and their knowledge and practice are all in order. In other words, their intention is of such a level that whatever is connected to Allāh *taʿālā* is nevertheless done for His pleasure. In addition to this, actions which are connected to a person's habits and temperament – they too become solely for Allāh *taʿālā*. And this is the real excellence. Standing up for night salāh is an angelic quality while sleeping is a human need. If a person rectifies his night worship, it is as if he acquired angelic qualities. This too is an excellent trait. However, the highest

excellence of a human is to progress while remaining a human. In other words, to make one’s night worship for Allāh *taʿālā* is not as great an achievement as making one’s sleep – which is a human necessity – solely for Allāh *taʿālā* through a correct intention.

Note: Glory to Allāh! H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* explained and expounded on the statement of H̲ad̲rat Muʿādh ibn Jabal *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* in a most beautiful manner. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him with the best of rewards. (Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

HYPOCRISY

Hypocrisy or rejection with the heart is an internal ailment which has become quite common nowadays. People have always been suffering from ailments of the heart. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فِيْ قُلُوْبِهِمْ مَّرَضٌ

In their hearts is a sickness.[1]

This is why we must not be deceived by people's appearances and sweet tongues. Do not consider these to be any more than cosmetics and external embellishments. Shāh Walī Allāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* went into much detail on this subject in his *al-Fauz al-Kabīr* and *Hujjatullāh al-Bālighah*. He refers to it as practical hypocrisy or hypocrisy in actions. He writes:

> Allāh *taʿālā* clearly describes the characteristics and actions of the hypocrites in the Qur'ān. He mentions many conditions about both types of hypocrites (i.e. creedal and practical hypocrites) so that the entire Muslim nation may desist from such conditions.

Shāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* says further on:

> If you want to see an example of the hypocrites during the blessed era of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in our times, then go to the assemblies of the wealthy and see how preference is given to

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 10.

> pleasing them over the pleasure of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.
>
> If we look at it with an equitable eye, there is no difference between the hypocrites who heard the speech of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam directly and chose hypocrisy, and the hypocrites who were born today. They know the orders of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam with absolute certainty but they still act against them.

Look at how beautifully he explains further on:

> In short, when you read the Qur'ān you must never think that the dispute was with a nation which existed in those days and which does not exist today (so there is no need for us to apply our condition to theirs). Rather, we will have to firmly believe in the existence of such a group in the light of the following Hadīth:
>
> لتتبعن سنن من قبلكم[1]
>
> *You will most certainly follow the ways of those who were before you.*
>
> There is no tribulation of those days which is not to be found today.

Previously I used to quote the above texts. But now I found a Hadīth in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad ibn Hambal *rahimahullāh* so no can even think of rejecting it. Everyone believes in the Hadīth, how can it be

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[1] صحيح البخاري، كتاب أحاديث الأنبياء، باب ما ذكر عن بني إسرائيل، حديث ٣٤٥٦.

rejected? One of my associates was speaking about hypocrisy so an ʿālim became angry at him and said: "You are calling people hypocrites?!" He immediately showed him the Hadīth from the *Musnad* in which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself speaks about the different types of hypocrisy. Included among them is a heart which has īmān and hypocrisy. The Hadīth reads as follows:

عن أبي سعيد رضي الله عنه قال قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: القلوب أربعة، قلب أجرد فيه مثل السراج يزهر، وقلب أغلف مربوط على غلافه، وقلب منكوس، وقلب مصفح. فأما القلب الأجرد فقلب المؤمن سراجه فيه نوره. وأما القلب الأغلف فقلب الكافر. وأما المنكوس فقلب المنافق عرف ثم أنكر. وأما القلب المصفح فقلب فيه إيمان ونفاق. فمثل الإيمان فيه كمثل البقلة يمدها الماء الطيب ومثل النفاق فيه كمثل القرحة يمدها القيح والدم. فأي المدتين غلبت على الأخرى غلبت عليه.[1]

Abū Saʿīd radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: The hearts of man can be divided into four categories: (1) a heart which is (ajrad) completely barren, in which something like a light is shining, (2) a heart which is (aghlaf) covered by a type of covering, (3) a heart which is mankūs, and (4) a heart which is musaffah. (Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam himself explains each one): (1) An ajrad heart is the heart of a believer, and the light in it is the light of īmān. (2) An aghlaf heart is the heart of

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[1] مسند أحمد، ج ١٧، ص ٢٠٨.

an unbeliever. (3) A mankūs heart is the heart of a hypocrite. It recognized the truth but rejected it. (4) A mu<u>s</u>affa<u>h</u> heart has both īmān and hypocrisy in it. The īmān in it is like greenery which grows lush with wholesome water. And the hypocrisy in it is like a boil which grows with blood and pus. Whichever of the two overpowers the other, that is the condition which will overpower the person's heart.

This is my fundamental argument with people. They refer to everyone as sincere believers and consider them to be Muslims like those of the past, having nothing whatsoever to do with hypocrisy. I say that when I evaluate their conditions, I find that they are not in line with the conditions of past Muslims. Rather, their conditions are like those of the hypocrites. How, then, can I say that they are sincere believers!? Obviously they are included among those regarding whom Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said there is īmān and hypocrisy in their hearts. Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* foretold that there will come a time when there will be 100 camels but not a single person will be worthy of riding them. I say that the era which Rasūlullāh *<u>s</u>allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was making reference to is this era.

When the marks of hypocrisy are so glaring, we can speak about it and we can say that people are suffering from the illness of hypocrisy. Nowadays people think that if a person is wearing good clothes, his īmān is good. The one whose speech is good, his heart is good. Deception is considered to be an art, whereas Allāh *taʿālā* said with regard to the hypocrites:

هُمُ الْعَدُوُّ فَاحْذَرْهُمْ

They are the real enemies, so beware of them.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes in his commentary to the above verse:

(هم العدو) استيناف أي هم الكاملون في العداوة والراسخون فيها، فإن أعدى الأعادي العدو المداجي الذي يكاشرك وتحت ضلوعه الداء الدوي ككثير من أبناء الزمان.[2]

They are complete in their enmity and firmly resolute in it. The worst enemy is the hidden one who smiles in your presence while beneath his ribs is a destructive ailment, like many of our people today.

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* was an erudite scholar. Look at what he is writing about the people of his era. I say that this is also the condition of our people. In fact, they are worse. You yourself ponder over the conditions of the Muslims and decide whether I am right or wrong. You people know fully well that every other day such incidents occur through which we learn that these types of conditions are experienced by the elite and the laity. For example, two people went to court. Money from the pocket of one of them disappeared. When he went home he said that his companion took his money. Just look! They went together, they remained together, but this is how he fulfilled the right of his friend!

Listen to another story: I noticed a man going to a certain person and sitting with him. One day he

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[1] Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 4.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٨، ص ٩٨.

uttered vulgar words about him and said: “If I had the opportunity I would have throttled him.”

This is the type of friendship today. These are thoughts he had about the person in whose company he was sitting everyday.

Allāh *taʿālā* abhors these actions and they are totally against sincerity. How, then, can we progress? Sincerity has departed from the Muslims, this is why there are problems and corruption everywhere.

There was a man who spent Ramaḏān here. I said to him: “Go home, you will experience comfort.” He replied: “I have no problems with the food here. If I go home, then although I will get food there, I will also have to suffer a beating. There is no beating here and I am living a life of peace. If I was not with you, I would go mad with the evil manners of my house people.” This is the condition in general. Those who have experienced these conditions will understand well what I am saying.

An incident related to Shaykh Sa'dī

Ḫaḏrat Saʿdī *raḫimahullāh* relates his own story in his *Gulistān*. A group of Sufis refused to allow him to remain in their company and the reason they gave was: “Just as you are making this request to us now, another person made a similar request in the past. We accepted and he began living with us. On one occasion, we stopped beneath a fort to spend the night there. He took our water jug and left. We thought that he was going for some need so we kept silent. He went into the fort, stole a container filled with pearls and left. There was a clamour in the fort, the guards came out, apprehended us, took us into the fort, locked us up and began beating us. Subsequently we decided

that we are not going to allow anyone to remain in our company.”

Hadrat Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* says that he said to them: “Although I have been deprived of your company, I have still not been deprived of the benefit of the company of the Sufis. Because I now learnt one point from this incident, viz. when a stranger comes to you, you must not trust him without first investigating his condition. It is most essential to differentiate between friend and foe.”

Note: This incident contains a great lesson and admonition for us. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Let me relate an incident which took place in Allāhābād.

There was an elderly man who used to come frequently to my place. He used to quote many poems. He then asked me permission to attend my classes. His brother-in-law and son used to come to me as well and had a lot of faith in me. I related to them his request to attend my classes. Their response was soft and hesitant which gave me the impression that they were not interceding on his behalf. They said: “You can do as you like.” I granted him permission and he began attending my assemblies and classes. He then went and told his brother-in-law and son that he attends my classes to learn my secrets. The two came and conveyed this information to me. I called for him and asked him about it. Another Maulwī Sāhib was present. He asked: “Do you accept such and such Maulānā Sāhib? He also wrote on the prohibition of hypocrisy in his book. I used to consider it permissible. Now you will hear certain incidents which you will not remember, but I am able to remember

such incidents very well because I use them to my advantage."

It is difficult to rectify one's bad habits. It is easy to perform h̲ajj. It is easy to perform s̲alāh and keep fast. But it is very difficult to rectify and correct one's evil traits.

There was a woman who used to remain displeased with her daughter-in-law. The reason was that the other daughters-in-law used to complain about her, and she too used to complain about them. Just think with what hopes women get their sons married. But no sooner the daughter-in-law comes into the house, the mother becomes an enemy of her son and her daughter-in-law.

I am trying to make this assembly into a special one but am not succeeding. People neither listen to nor understand what I say. This is why they go elsewhere and relate it incorrectly. This results in disputes and disharmony. A proper system is therefore essential. People come here for years but remain deprived of the fundamental progress. In fact, they retrogress. The reason is because there is no truthfulness. There is no quest and no sincerity. Despite all this, they seek blessings and high levels. Their ailment of hypocrisy becomes apparent after many days. This is why it is difficult to understand it. A poet says:

> From the different conditions of a person, the level of his knowledge can be gauged within one day. But one must not be deceived by his internal self because it cannot be fathomed even after several years.

There was a worshipper who lived not very far away from our town. He built a temple, had a wife and

children, and he used to engage in worship in his own way. He had his previous house in a nearby village which he had left because of the villagers' irreligiousness and bad mannerisms. He used to go to this house occasionally. Whenever he went there, the locals would come to him and talk about rioting against the Muslims. He would say to them: "Although they are Muslims, they are at least firm on their religion and are keeping to their own work. What harm are they doing to you? Let them carry on."

What excellent words of advice he used to give them! The people would fall silent. This story became well-known that a worshipper left his village because of the irreligiousness of his people, and built a house for himself outside the village. The point which we have to learn from this is that he was a kāfir, yet he did not want any rioting against the Muslims. The condition of us – Muslims – today is the opposite.

It is most saddening! Like the hypocrites, those people like rioting and sedition. Brother, do what you want but do not corrupt this place. There is a special procedure here. Only those who want to rectify themselves and save themselves from corruption must come here. You have already corrupted your houses, business places, courts, etc.; at least allow this place to remain protected. If you do not like the system here, why do you come in the first place? What is the benefit in your coming here? We will most certainly speak about these matters because it is essential for us to preserve and protect the Ṯarīqah. If not, our Ṯarīqah will come to an end. How unfortunate that will be!

The condition nowadays is that people do search for the mashā'ikh but there is no truthfulness and

sincerity. Whereas the first step of a murīd ought to be on truthfulness.

> O Farīd! Remain true to your belief so that you acquire the key to Allāh-recognition. If you do not have truthfulness, how will you benefit.
>
> If a builder places the first brick crookedly, the wall will go crooked up to the stars.

Truthfulness is essential for both the mashā'ikh and the seekers. In other words, just as it is necessary for the shaykh, the seekers too must be genuine and true in their quest. If truthfulness is absent, there will be no success. Nowadays people feel that the shaykh has to be truthful while they consider themselves to be totally free. Whether they have a quest or not, whether they are genuine or not – they feel that any situation and condition is acceptable for them.

There was a saint in our area. He was an 'ālim, a man of kashf (spiritual exposition) and one who followed the Sunnat. His name was Maulānā 'Alī Ahmad Sāhib *rahimahullāh*. People in our area used to speak very highly of him, but he did not have good opinions about them and would express them as well.

I used to say to my relatives: "The person whom you praise so much and have so much of confidence in has a different view about you. Will you accept what he says: he used to say: 'The food is ready and prepared but there is no one to eat it.' He also said: 'These people come here and start crying before I can even speak. (i.e. they have no intelligence).'"

Note: In this way the shaykh was saying that they have neither Dīn nor intelligence. May Allāh *ta'ālā* – through His grace and the blessings of Hadrat

Musli̲h̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* – confer us with both these bounties. Āmīn.

There are many incidents of this nature. I related these few so that you people may develop some insight and understand the conditions of our times. If not, you will be caught up in calamities due to inexperience. Just today I learnt that a person deceived one of my associates into signing a document which resulted in his imprisonment; and he has no one to stand as surety for him. When the person came to him for the signature, he should have first inquired and asked, and then decided whether he wants to sign the document or not. Because he has no intelligence and is a simpleton, he considers everyone else to be like him. This is why he gets caught in their trap. I relate incidents like this repeatedly so that even religious people may wake up and understand the workings of this world. I say that you must not cause harm to anyone. At the same time, you must never be so naïve that anyone and everyone deceives you. Instead, you must be vigilant. You must understand the tricks and deceptions of our times so that you can safeguard yourself from harm. Where is the wisdom in being intelligent and experienced before religiousness comes into your life, and you become stupid and foolish after you become religious!? This cannot be tolerated and is most inappropriate.

Incidents of this nature used to take place quite often in my hometown. This had an effect on my heart and mind, and my health used to remain bad. However, ever since I came here (Allāhābād), my health is good. The reason is that I experience fewer unpleasant incidents here. I therefore feel an increase in my strength with each passing day. This is why I prefer the people of this city over the people of other places.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What glad tidings for the people of Allāhābād. We consider it an honour that Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* publicly announced that he considers the city of Allāhābād as his hometown. This is the very city which was inhabited by Hadrat Shāh Muhibbullāh Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh*, Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Husayn Sāhib Allāhābādī *rahimahullāh* and Hadrat Maulānā Liyāqat ʿAlī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who had fought for Indian independence. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to be religious and to serve Dīn as heirs of Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* from one generation to the next. And may Allāh *taʿālā* preserve the love and attachment of the residents of Allāhābād. Āmīn.

Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān
Dār al-Maʿārif al-Islāmīyyah, Karelī, Allāhābād
28 Rajab 1432 A.H.

THE NEED TO FOLLOW A QUALIFIED MENTOR

Do you know from where our work got spoilt? It got spoilt when our juniors and seniors became equals. Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had foretold this situation:

لن يزال الناس بخير ما تباينوا، فإذا تساووا هلكوا

People will continue enjoying goodness as long as they uphold differences in ranks. Once they all become equals, they will be destroyed.

Now I ask you, is this era of ours not an affirmation of that prediction? It is no hidden fact. It is openly observed that no senior is considered to be a senior, and no junior considers himself to be a junior. Rather, every junior person is ready to be a senior. Similarly you will get an ignorant person who is not prepared to accept an ʿālim as his senior. People in general have no value whatsoever for an ʿālim, and they appointed ignoramuses as their leaders. A poet rightly said:

لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم – ولا سراة إذا جهالهم سادوا

When people become equal in the sense that every person is their officer and chief, their condition will never be rectified. And if they appoint an ignorant person as their leader, then he is certainly non-existent.

H̲ad̲rat H̲āfiz̲ *rah̲imahullāh* conveys the same theme as follows:

> The condition of the world has become very strange: The Arab horse is left wounded beneath the pack saddle, while a gold band is placed around the neck of a donkey.

Do you know where this ruin has come from? The main cause of it is bad character. People have become proud and arrogant. This is why following another person, emulating him, submitting before him have become like death to them. Whereas these are the qualities wherein lies our progress, and these were the distinguishing hallmarks of our people of the past.

Three pre-requisites for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim

There are three pre-requisites which are considered to be essentials for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim.

(1) He must practise on his knowledge. If he is not like this, people will not consider him eligible to become a leader. In our times we see that practising on his knowledge is no more considered to be necessary. Instead, they feel it is essential for him to speak clearly and eloquently, to speak profusely and to deliver dynamic speeches. When an ʿālim is able to do this, people conclude that he is a very senior ʿālim. Whereas the following Hadīth is quoted in the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh*:

إن أخوف ما أخاف على أمتي كل منافق عليم اللسان[1]

The thing which I fear the most for my ummat is an articulate hypocrite.

A comprehensive explanation of "an articulate hypocrite"

ʿAllāmah Jalāl ad-Dīn Suyūtī *rahimahullāh* quoted this Hadīth in his *al-Jāmiʿ as-Saghīr*. There are four commentaries to this book. I will quote the explanation to this Hadīth from each of the

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[1] مسند أحمد، ص ٢٨٩، حديث ١٤٣، فيض القدير، ج ١، ص ٢٢١، باب الهمزة.

commentaries. ʿAllāmah Shaykh Muhammad Hafnī writes:

قوله أخوف أي من أشد ما أخاف. قوله كل منافق عليم أي طلق اللسان في العلوم والفصاحة خالي القلب من العمل به، إنما خاف صلى الله عليه وسلم على أمته منه لأنه لفهمه العلم يقتدي به الناس فيضلهم.

The thing which I fear the most for my ummat is an articulate hypocrite. In other words, he is fluent in the sciences and eloquent in speech, while his heart is devoid of practising on it. Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam feared such a person for his ummat because the person's understanding of knowledge will cause people to follow him and he will lead them astray.

He caused people to become his followers and did not tell them about the other scholars who are practising ʿulamā'.

The following explanation is from *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*, a commentary of *al-Jāmiʿ as-Saghīr*:

أخوف ما أخاف أي من أخوف ما أخافه على أمتي كل منافق أي نفاقا عمليا عليم اللسان قال مناوي أي عالم بالعلم منطق اللسان له لكنه جاهل القلب والعمل فاسد العقيدة مغر للناس بشقاشقه وتفصحه وتعقره في الكلام.

The thing which I fear most for my ummat is a practical hypocrite. Munāwī said: It refers to an ʿālim who speaks profusely on matters of knowledge while he is an ignoramus as regards his heart and actions, and of

corrupt beliefs. He deludes people through his flowing speech, eloquence, and in-depth discussions.

وقال العلقمي أخرج الطبراني عن علي رضي الله عنه قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم إني لا أتخوف على أمتي مؤمنا ولا مشركا، فأما المؤمن فيحجزه إيمانه، وأما المشرك فيقمعه كفره، ولكن أتخوف عليكم منافقا عليم اللسان يقول ما تعرفون ويعمل ما تنكرون.[١]

Al-ʿAlqamī said that at-Tabarānī narrated from Hadrat ʿAlī radiyallāhu ʿanhu that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: I do not fear any believer nor any polytheist for my ummat because a believer will be prevented by his īmān from saying or doings things which are contrary to Islam. As for a polytheist, his unbelief is enough to uproot him. The one whom I really fear for you is an articulate hypocrite. He say things which are known to you but does things which are alien to you.

The third commentator, ʿAllāmah ʿAbd ar-Ra'ūf Munāwī *rahimahullāh*, explains this Hadīth in *Kitāb at-Taysīr* which you already read above from the text of *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*. ʿAllāmah ʿAzīzī *rahimahullāh* quoted his statement by saying, "Munāwī said..." There is no need to mention it again. However, the same ʿAllāmah Munāwī has another detailed explanation of it. He writes in *Fayd al-Qadīr*:

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[1]السراج المنير، ص ٧٠.

كل منافق عليم اللسان أي عالم للعلم منطلق اللسان به لكنه جاهل القلب والعمل، فاسد العقيدة، يغر الناس شقشقة لسانه فيقع بسبب اتباعه خلق كثير في الزلل.

An articulate hypocrite refers to the one who has knowledge, and is fluent in speaking about it, but he is ignorant in his heart and actions, and corrupt in his beliefs. His flowing tongue deceives the people. Consequently, many people follow him and fall into errors and mistakes.

The author of *Fayḏ al-Qadīr* then writes:

وقد كان بعض العارفين لا يظهر لتلميذه إلا على أشرف أحواله خوفا أن يقتدى به فيها أو يسوء ظنه به فيها فلا ينتفع.

Some Sufis would only expose their best conditions to their students lest they follow them in what is not best or they have bad thoughts about them. If this were to happen, the students will not benefit from them.

قال الحراني والخوف حذر النفس من أمور ظاهرة تضرها. قال صاحب الهداية فساد كبير عالم متهتك وأكبر منه جاهل يتنسك، هما فتنة للعالمين عظيمة لمن بهما في دينه يتمسك وسبب تحديث عمر بذلك أن الأحنف سيد أهل البصر كان فاضلا فصيحا مفوها فقدم على عمر فحبسه عنده سنة يأتيه كل يوم وليلة فلا يأتيه عنه إلا ما يحب، ثم دعاه فقال تدري لم حبستك عني، قال لا، قال إن رسول الله صلى الله عليه

وسلم حدثنا فذكره ثم قال خشيت أن تكون منهم، فالحمد لله يا أحنف.

Al-Harrānī said: Khauf refers to the fear of the self from external things which would be harmful to it. The author of al-Hidāyah said: The scholar who tramples the Sharīʿat through his evil actions is a major tribulation in this world. And worse than him is an ignorant person who is a worshipper. Both these are major tribulations for the people – those of whom follow and emulate them in their Dīnī matters. The reason why Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu related this Hadīth is that Ahnaf, the chief of the people of Basra, was a very eloquent and articulate speaker. When he came to Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu, the latter restrained him for one year. He would go to him every morning and evening to check on him and was impressed by whatever he said and did. After one year, he called him and said: "Do you know why I restrained you?" He replied: "No." Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu said: "Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said to us..." He then quoted the Hadīth under discussion and said: "I feared that you might be one of them. However, all praise is due to Allāh taʿālā, O Ahnaf, that you are not of them."

وفي رواية لابن عساكر أنه قدم عليه فخطبه فأعجبه منطقه فحبسه سنة يختبره، ثم قال كنت أخشى أن تكون منافقا عليم اللسان وإن

رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم حذرنا منه، وأرجو أن تكون مؤمنا فانحدر إلى مصرك.[1]

A narration of Ibn ʿAsākir rahimahullāh states that when Ahnaf came [to Madīnah] and delivered a sermon, Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu was impressed. So he restrained him for one year to test him. At the end of one year, he said: "I feared that you might be an articulate hypocrite regarding whom Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam had warned us. I hope you are a true believer. You may now go to your city.

Now what crime have I committed if I quote this Hadīth from the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* or its commentary from the reliable commentaries of the ʿulamā'? This is a statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*; it is not my own words. If the theme of this Hadīth applies to you, to me, to any ʿālim or to any ignorant person; then let it be so. We are not responsible for that. The Hadīth is totally authentic in its place. It cannot happen that we stop quoting and explaining the Hadīth out of fear for you, out of fear for your objections, out of concern that you will get angry or because your rank will be reduced. If this subject is against you and this is why you are displeased with me, then you can certainly be as angry as you want with me, but do not get angry with the Hadīth. It will be a major evil which will cause you to lose your īmān.

In the narration of Tabarānī which ʿAllāmah ʿAzīzī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* quoted in *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*,

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ٢٢١، باب الهمزة.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not fear tribulation from any believer from his ummat because since he is a believer, his īmān will restrain him from committing evils. Similarly, he did not fear tribulation from a polytheist. He said that since a polytheist already has a thing as cursed as polytheism around his neck, that will be enough to destroy him. Thus, he is himself immersed in tribulation so he will not be able to test and try his ummat. However, the thing which he feared for his ummat was a hypocrite who is very articulate in his speech. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* then explains it himself by saying that he will say things which are known to you but his actions will be contrary to that. Therefore, instead of guiding people, he will lead them astray.

Shaykh Muh̲ammad H̲afnī *rah̲imahullāh* says that Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* explained the reason for his fear. He feared the articulate hypocrite because when people listen to his academic talks and discussions, they will assume him to be an ʿālim of Dīn and follow him, while he will lead them astray. He was already astray because of his hypocrisy; he will now be a deviator because he will be leading others astray.

The difference between ʿulamā of the Hereafter and evil ʿulamā

I quoted the meaning of "an articulate hypocrite" from four commentaries of *al-Jāmiʿ as̲-S̲aghīr*, i.e. from the author of *Taysīr*, the author of *as-Sirāj al-Munīr*, *Fayd̲ al-Qadīr* and from ʿAllāmah H̲afnī *rah̲imahullāh*. Each one explained this H̲adīth with very minor variations. H̲ad̲rat Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* also has a chapter in his *Ih̲yā' al-ʿUlūm* titled *al-Bāb as-Sādis Fī Āfāt al-ʿIlm Wa Bayān ʿAlāmāt ʿUlamā' al-Ākhirah Wa ʿUlamā' as-Sū'* (Chapter Six on the Obstacles to Knowledge and an Explanation on the ʿUlamā' of the

Hereafter and Evil 'Ulamā'). In this chapter he quotes the statement of Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu*:

قال عمر رضي الله عنه إن أخوف ما أخاف على هذه الأمة المنافق العليم، فقالوا وكيف يكون منافقا عليما، قال عليم اللسان جاهل القلب والعمل.[١]

Hadrat 'Umar radiyallāhu 'anhu said: "The thing which I fear the most for this ummat is a knowledgeable hypocrite." The people asked: "How can a hypocrite be knowledgeable?" He said: "He will be knowledgeable with his tongue and ignorant in his heart and actions."

The Ahādīth in this regard teach us one point, but the explanation given by Hadrat 'Umar *radiyallāhu 'anhu* must have been heard from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam* as is the case of Rasūlullāh's statement which we quoted previously:

يقول ما تعرفون ويعمل ما تنكرون

He says things which are known to you but does things which are alien to you.

Be that as it may, after reading the Hadīth of the *Musnad* of Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* and its commentary, the point which we learn is that oratory, gift of the gab, eloquence and mere articulation are things to be feared. A Hadīth states:

الحياء والعي شعبتان من الإيمان، والبذاء والبيان شعبتان من النفاق.[٢]

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ٦٤.

[2] سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر، باب ما جاء في العي، باب ٨٠، حديث ٢٠٢٧.

Modesty and the inability to express one's self are from īmān while obscenity and articulation are from hypocrisy.

Nowadays we see that the speakers and the audiences – everyone – are focused on eloquence and rhetoric. A lecturer is considered to be distinguished only if he is eloquent and articulate. And the audiences only enjoy a lecture in which the speaker is fluent, uses rhyming words and well-balanced sentences and paragraphs; and the assembly is further embellished with poetry.

I am not saying that eloquence and articulation are not desirable or that they have no effect on the hearts. However, the ears can certainly obtain enjoyment from words but spirituality cannot be developed from them. This is because you already heard what has been said about such a person – he is not guided himself, how will he guide others?

This is why the 'ulamā' of the various eras warned the people of their times in the light of the above-quoted Hadīth and tried to save them from falling into this trap. In fact, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* said that one of the obstacles and calamities of knowledge is when it is only on the tongue and has no effect on the hearts and body parts. He uses this as a basis to differentiate between the 'ulamā' of the Hereafter and the evil 'ulamā'.

I feel I should quote some portions from *Ihyā' al-'Ulūm* on this subject.

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم: العلم علمان، علم على اللسان فذلك حجة الله تعالى على خلقه، وعلم في القلب، فذلك العلم النافع، وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: لا تتعلموا العلم لتباهوا به العلماء، ولتجاروا به السفهاء،

ولتصرفوا به وجوه الناس إليكم، فمن فعل ذلك فهو في النار. وقال صلى الله عليه وسلم: لأنا من غير الدجال أخوف عليكم من الدجال، فقيل وما ذلك، فقال: من الأئمة المضلين.[1]

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Knowledge is of two types: (1) Knowledge on the tongue. That is Allāh's evidence against the creation. (2) Knowledge in the heart. That is beneficial knowledge." Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "Do not study knowledge to vex pride over the ʿulamā', to dispute with the ignoramuses, and to sway people towards you. Whoever does this shall go into the Hell-fire." Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: "I fear non-Dajjāl's more for you than I fear Dajjāl." He was asked: "Who is non-Dajjāl?" He replied: "Imāms who mislead people."

Since we find excessive practices against this condition [the first condition of an Allāh-fearing ʿālim], I went into some detail on this subject.

The second prerequisite for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim

The second condition as explained by the ʿulamā' is that the ʿālim must have been under the training of the mashā'ikh and remained in their company for a considerable period of time. From this we will be able to conclude that he possesses the qualities of his elders and seniors. This has been the practice of the pious predecessors.

The first group was that of the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum.* Their continued companionship with

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ١، ص ٦٤.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is well-known. In fact, the word "Sahābī" is derived from *suhbat* – companionship. The manner in which they adopted and absorbed the words, actions and life-situations of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is also well-known. Furthermore, they believed fully in whatever emanated from him and the manner in which it emanated from him. This is irrespective of whether they understood it or not. They had full conviction in the fact that everything from Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is so true and genuine that it can never be opposed or contradicted. It is so full of wisdom that its law cannot be broken. And it is so perfect, that no defect and loss can even come near it.

This knowledge, conviction and firm faith of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was the fruit of their lengthy companionship with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Their emulation and submission to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* can be gauged from the incident which occurred with Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* on the occasion of the treaty of Hudaybiyah. When the treaty was being written under the pressure of the unbelievers, it was an occasion to raise objections. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* also had points to object on. He came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said: "O Rasūlullāh! Are we not on the truth while these unbelievers are on falsehood?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Indeed." Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "If we are martyred, will we not go to Paradise? And if they are killed will they not go to Hell?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Yes." Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked: "Why, then, should we demonstrate weakness in our religion? Why should we return without showing Allāh's decision between us and them?"

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "O son of Khattāb! I am Allāh's Messenger and you must believe that He will never abandon me." On hearing this, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* left but he was still not full satisfied. He was filled with rage towards the unbelievers. He went to Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and posed the same questions to him. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: "Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is Allāh's Messenger and He will never abandon him."

I say, just look at the level of affinity and affiliation which Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* gave exactly the same answers which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had given to Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* although Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was not present in the conversation between the two. Thereafter, Sūrah al-Fath was revealed to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Its first verse reads as follows:

اِنَّا فَتَحْنَا لَكَ فَتْحًا مُّبِيْنًا

We have passed for you a clear decision.[1]

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* called for Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* and read these verses to him. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* asked: "O Rasūlullāh! Is this the victory?" Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* replied: "Yes." Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was satisfied and left happily.[2]

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[1] Sūrah al-Fath, 48: 1.

[2] صحيح مسلم، كتاب الجهاد، باب صلح الحديبية، حديث ٤٦٣٣.

Look at an objection which was stirred in Hadrat ʿUmar's heart on the basis of his intense love for Islam. He presented it to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but when he learnt the reality of the situation and the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* referred to it as a clear victory, and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* himself pointed in that direction, then Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* accepted without any hesitation, this notwithstanding the fact that a rational reason for referring to it as a victory was not demonstrated as yet. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* had full faith in Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and believed that total obedience to him is essential, this is why he set aside his rational reasoning. This was solely due to the benefit of remaining in his company and the effect of submission. Furthermore, he knew that one has to exercise patience on occasions where there could be an objection because proofs and evidences for it will certainly come to the fore.

The glad tidings mentioned in Sūrah al-Fath were not revealed just by chance. Rather, this sūrah was revealed when the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* were swallowing the bitter drink of grief and worry, and there was confusion about the actual situation. When they opted for the path of submission and cast aside their personal opinions, all objections were removed completely. It is related that Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was so remorseful that he was shy to go in front of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. He used to say: "What happened to me that I went and argued with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*?!" He used to say this repeatedly and express his remorse.

Now listen to how the objection was removed. Allāh *taʿālā* said in the same sūrah:

لَوْ لَا رِجَالٌ مُّؤْمِنُوْنَ وَنِسَآءٌ مُّؤْمِنَاتٌ لَمْ تَعْلَمُوْهُمْ اَنْ تَطَئُوْهُمْ فَتُصِيْبُكُمْ مِّنْهُمْ مَّعَرَّةٌ بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ، لِّيُدْخِلَ اللّٰهُ فِيْ رَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَّشَآءُ، لَوْ تَزَيَّلُوْا لَعَذَّبْنَا الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا مِنْهُمْ عَذَابًا اَلِيْمًا.

Had it not been for the fear of your trampling so many believing men and believing women (presently in Makkah) unknown to you, and on whose account misery would have afflicted you unknowingly, so that Allāh may admit into His mercy whom He wills. Had they [believers] stood aside, We would have inflicted a painful punishment on the unbelievers (of Makkah, at the hands of Muslims).[1]

The essence of this verse is that Allāh *taʿālā* gives two reasons for not permitting battle on this occasion. One is that some Muslim men and women were still residing in Makkah, regarding whom the Muslims had no knowledge. Thus, if a battle took place, these innocent Muslims would have been trampled with the unbelievers. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* said that if they moved out of Makkah and it was inhabited by unbelievers only, the latter would have certainly been punished. The second reason is that Allāh *taʿālā* – in His knowledge – has decreed Islam for some of them. In other words, either they were to embrace Islam or their progenies. If this is the situation, how could permission be given to uproot them completely? When these verses were revealed, the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* lost their senses and the evidence was clearly demonstrated to them. They then realized that the thing which they assumed to be unfavourable was most appropriate.

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[1] Sūrah al-Fath̲, 48: 25.

This became an example and a principle for latter peoples. In other words, just as the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* cast aside their personal opinions and submitted before Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, the same was done by the Tābiʿīn in the presence of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. In other words, they did not apply their opinions and intellects against the statements and teachings of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. The result of this was that they became jurists in religion and reached the peak in the sciences of the Sharīʿat. This is an affirmation of the correctness of our principle that you will not find an ʿālim who is famous and whose knowledge and blessings are widely accepted who does not have someone whom he looks up to and whom he follows. In other words, no person ever reached the level of perfection without following someone above him, and no one can ever reach such a level in the future as well.

On the other hand, study any deviated sect and group which acts against the Sunnat, and you will see that it does not possess the quality of submission and emulation.

Ibn Hazm Zāhirī was a senior scholar of his time. However, the reason why he was criticized was that he did not consider himself in need of deriving benefit from a shaykh and did not adopt the mannerisms of the mashā'ikh. He felt there was no need to follow anyone or to remain in anyone's company. He considered himself sufficient for his own self in the acquisition of knowledge. This is why he slipped at every step and became a target of criticism and condemnation.

I say, there is not just one Ibn Hazm like this. Rather, there have been both types of people in every era. One

group considered it essential to follow the pious predecessors while the other group felt that its own knowledge was enough. Thus, each group was treated by its successors as it had treated its predecessors.

The third prerequisite for an Allāh-fearing ʿālim

The third prerequisite laid down by the ʿulamā' is that of following and emulating. Just as the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – as explained above – the Tābiʿīn followed the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* in similar fashion. This practice continued in every era. Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* distinguished himself in this quality over his contemporaries. Almost all the seniors of Dīn possessed this quality but Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* possessed it to the limit.

When this quality was abandoned, bidʿat raised its head. This is because when the way of the pious predecessors is not followed on a certain issue, it is proof that something new has developed in the person who discarded their way. That new way is following of one's desires. In other words, a person discards following the ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh on account of following his desires.

The point which I wanted to make is that the religious spirit which was found in us stemmed from following and emulating. Because this spirit has departed from the entire community, the power of the ummat has dissipated and we are suffering every type of Dīnī and worldly loss. Start following and emulating today and you will see its blessings.

Note: You have read that just as it is necessary to be in the company of the mashā'ikh to be an Allāh-fearing ʿālim, it is essential to follow them. This is listed as the third prerequisite. I recall a statement of

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* which I take the courage to quote here:

H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* noticed that a certain person had fallen into loss so he said to H̲ad̲rat H̲akīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh*: "H̲ad̲rat! That person was in the company of such and such saint, yet he is in this condition!?" H̲ad̲rat H̲akīmul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* said: "What benefit is there in merely being in someone's company? A person will only be rectified and reformed when he remains in the company of a saint with the intention of rectification and reformation."

We learn from this that mere companionship with a saint is not enough. Rather, when the person who remains in his company has the intention of rectification, he will be rectified. Mere company is not sufficient.

I quoted this statement for the general benefit of people. If we remain in the company of a saint with the intention of rectification, we will benefit. If not, we will not gain anything even if we remain with him for years, or visit him frequently. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

(Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

READING THE BOOKS OF THE SUFIS

In the course of my stay in Lucknow, I heard a hakīm saying to another hakīm: "Do you know how the art of medicine was destroyed?" He then gave the answer himself: "Medicine was destroyed by the destruction of the clinic." Medicine is practised in a clinic, and when a science or craft is not practised, it will be destroyed. In other words, that science will no longer exist. Nowadays no need is felt for a clinic. Students feel that it is enough for them to merely read medical books. Consequently, despite learning and studying, the science is neither mastered nor does a student develop any experience. This is because expertise in medicine can only be acquired by remaining under the tutelage of an expert physician.

I very much liked this statement of the hakīm sāhib and it opened an entire chapter of knowledge for me. The hakīm sāhib was crying over only the science of medicine while I was crying over the fact that the absence of genuine Sufis and erudite 'ulamā' – and their training and teaching – has put an end to the science of ethics, i.e. the science of tasawwuf. Hadrat Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that the soul of tasawwuf – teaching and training – has died at the mashā'ikh; only dhikr and other outer devotional practices remain. Obviously, when the teaching of a certain science is given up, its knowledge will also disappear. When its knowledge disappears, practising on it will vanish. When actions no longer remain, how will spiritual conditions be developed?

This is the reason for the present condition of all our sciences. People pay no attention to remaining in the company of expert teachers. This is why they do not acquire genuine knowledge. This was also the cause of

the destruction of tasawwuf, i.e. no attention was paid to the companionship of the mashā’ikh. Whereas this was the means of acquiring this science. After all, tasawwuf is a sentimental thing which is acquired through the companionship, teaching and training of the mashā’ikh. It cannot be acquired from books. To develop a taste for something, one has to remain in the company of the one who has already acquired that taste.

The erudite Sufis explicitly state that the books of tasawwuf are certainly not intended to pass on the sciences, nor can proximity with Allāh *taʿālā* and His friendship be acquired by studying these books. In his *at-Tanbīh at-Tarabī*, Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following statement of Qādī Thanā’ullāh Pānīpattī *rahimahullāh*:

قال القاضي ثناء الله رحمه الله تعالى في تفسيره تحت آية كما أرسلنا فيكم رسولا منكم يتلو عليكم اياته الآية، من أراد أن ينطق بتلك المعارف فلا بد له من إيراد مجازاة واستعارات لا يهتدي إلى مرامها العوام فيفسقونه ويكفرونه.

فإن قيل فأي ضرورة في تكلم بها وما بال القوم يصنفون فيها مجلدات. قلت ليس الغرض من تلك التصنيفات إعطاء تلك العلوم ولا يحصل بمطالعة تلك الكتب شيء من القرب والولاية، بل الغرض منها تنبيه العارفين المحصلين لتلك العلوم بالجذب والسلوك على بعض تفاصيلها

وتطبيق أحوال المريدين ومواجيدهم على أحوال الأكابر ومواجيدهم كي يظهر صحة أحوالهم وتطمئن به قلوبهم.[1]

In his commentary to the verse: "Just as We sent to you a Messenger from among you reciting to you His verses…" Qāḏī Thanā'ullāh raẖimahullāh said: The one who wants to speak on these sciences will have to resort to such allusions which the laity cannot fathom because they will label him a flagrant sinner and an unbeliever.

If someone asks: Then what is the need to speak on these sciences and to write books on them? I will say: The object of writing on those sciences is not to pass them on to the masses, nor can proximity to Allāh taʿālā be acquired by reading them. Rather, the object is to draw the attention of the ʿārifīn who have acquired those sciences through absorption (jadhb) and by treading the path to some details; and to apply the spiritual conditions and ecstasies of the disciples to the spiritual conditions and ecstasies of the seniors so that the correctness of their conditions may be displayed and their hearts may be satisfied and convinced by them.

We learn from the above statement of Qāḏī S̱āẖib *raẖimahullāh* that it is not the object of the books of tas̱awwuf to pass on and convey those sciences. How, then, can a person become a Sufi merely by reading those books? If he cannot even acquire knowledge from them, how will he acquire spiritual conditions through them!? Studying the books of the mashā'ikh will result in a person learning their words and

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[1] التنبيه الطربي، ص ٤١.

terminologies, and then vexing pride. In this way, he will go astray and lead others astray as well. This is why the mashā'ikh strictly forbade unqualified people from reading their books. They said:

نحن قوم يحرم النظر في كتبنا

If a person is not on our path, it is forbidden for him to look at our books.

وكذلك لا يجوز لأحد أن ينقل كلامنا إلا لمن يؤمن به، فمن نقله إلى من لا يؤمن به دخل هو والمنقول إليه جهنم الإنكار. وقد صرح بذلك أهل الله تعالى على رؤوس الأشهاد وقالوا من باح بالسر يستحق القتل، ومع ذلك فلم يسمع أهل الغفلة والحجاب بل تعدوا حدود القوم وأظهروا كلامهم لغير أهله.[1]

Similarly it is not permissible for a person to quote our speech except to the one who believes it. If a person quotes our speech to someone who does not believe in it, then both – the one who quoted it and the one who does not believe in it - will be cast into the fire of rejection. The Ahlullāh have openly announced that the one who discloses our secret is eligible to be killed. Despite this, the heedless ones and those over whom is a veil paid no heed to this. Instead, they transgressed the limits of the Sufis and conveyed their speech to unqualified people.

Look at the severe reprimand which is issued to those who study the books of the Sufis despite having no qualification to do so. These personalities made these

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[1] اليواقيت والجواهر، ص ٢١.

announcements out of self-respect and with a view to preserving the Tarīqah. They also prohibited unqualified people and outsiders from studying their books so that the qualified and unqualified are not intermixed, causing the Tarīqah to become corrupted. Unfortunately they were not successful in their efforts. In other words, outsiders could not restrain themselves from studying their books. They studied them, adopted their words, and became self-proclaimed Sufis. Consequently, they went astray and led others astray. They did all this solely out of a quest for power and authority.

Hadrat Rūmī *rahimahullāh* said:

> A wretched person steals the words and statements of the dervishes so that he can sway and manipulate the ignorant ones through his mesmerising words.

Prerequisites for mashā'ikh

This is the condition which I am observing in the Tarīqah today. In other words, there is no sign of education, training, focus on spiritual conditions, insight and affinity. Nor is it discussed anywhere. Tasawwuf is only in name and the customs of the Sufis remain. The reason for this is that the prerequisites which had been laid down for the shaykh and the murīd are not found in either of the two. For example, a major prerequisite for a shaykh is that he must be a man of spiritual conditions, and must not have acquired the Tarīqah from mere books of people and by word of mouth. If this is the case, he will not know the ups and downs of the Tarīqah, and he will not be aware of the conditions and causes which the seeker is to face in the path. Consequently, he will not be able to rectify him and will prove to be

dangerous for the seeker. The erudite Sufis say that a qualified shaykh is like a physician. If a physician cannot identify the primary organs and their peculiarities, and the components of medicines, he will be destructive to the patient. This is because knowledge of the peculiarities without being able to identify the organs themselves is not enough. The same theme is very importantly explained by Shaykh Muḫīyy ad-Dīn Ibn ʿArabī *raḫimahullāh*:

ومتى لم يكن الطبيب يميز أعيان الأعشاب والعقاقير ولم يكن عارفا بتركيب الأدوية فإنه مهلك للمريض، فإن العلم من غير العين لا يفيد فلا بد من عين اليقين وحينئذ ألا ترى لو كان للعشاب غرض في إهلاك المريض فإذا وصف الطبيب الدواء فأعطاه اللعشاب ما فيه هلاك العليل ويقول هذا مطلوبك فيسقيه الطبيب المريض فيهلك وإثمه في عنق الطبيب والعشاب، فإن الطبيب كان الواجب عليه أن لا يداويه إلا بما يعرف عينه وشخصه.

If a physician does not know the essence and form of the medicines, and is also ignorant of their composition, he will be destructive to a patient. This is because knowledge without physically seeing is of no benefit. Rather, it is necessary for him to be able to identify medicines with the eye of certainty. Look! If the pharmacist has a motive to kill the patient, and the physician prescribes a medicine for the patient without recognizing it himself, and the pharmacist gives him something which will be destructive to the patient, and says to the physician: "This the medicine which you asked for", and the physician gives it to the patient who then dies because of it, the crime will be on the physician and the pharmacist. This is because it was

the duty of the physician not to give the patient any medicine whose form and composition he does not know.

After presenting the example of a physician, he writes:

فكذلك الشيخ إذا لم يكن صاحب ذوق وأخذ الطريق من الكتب وأفواه الرجال، وقعد يربي به المريد طلبا للمرتبة والرياسة، فإنه مهلك لمن تبعه لأنه لا يعرف مورد الطالب ولا مصدره.[1]

Similar is the case with a shaykh. If he is not a man of spiritual conditions and acquired the Ṯarīqah from books and by word of mouth, and seated himself to train murīds in his quest for authority and power, then he will be most destructive to the one who follows him because in such a case he will not understand the changing conditions of a seeker (how, then, will he be able to rectify and reform him)?

Rectification is done on character, and this refers to the internal conditions of a person. These internal conditions are the catalysts for external actions. It is not possible to identify the catalysts merely by looking at external actions – this requires a taste and sentiment. This is why the past Sufis paid a lot of attention to all this. Consequently, when these prerequisites were fulfilled, those who went to the mashā'ikh left as great Sufis themselves. This resulted in massive strides in the field of Sufism. Now that these factors have been removed from tasawwuf, the retrogression is clearly visible.

[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٩.

Similarly, when the mashā'ikh said that it is not permissible for outsiders to study their books, how offended these people must have felt! It is not far fetched to assume that they must have labelled the mashā'ikh as extremists. However, if we observe the results and consequences, we will see that as long as people adhered to this prohibition of the Sufis, Sufism remained preserved and protected. Later on when people went against their order and studied their books despite this prohibition, and discussed Sufi themes in their assemblies without having an affinity with this science, then see how Sufism retrogressed. Look at how a science which was connected to the heart and emotions was reduced to an academic science!

I used to think to myself that why do the mashā'ikh say that it is h̲arām for outsiders to study their books? H̲alāl and h̲arām are juridical terms, what Sharʿī crime did the person commit that his action has been labelled h̲arām? The answer to this can be understood from the very same text of Shaykh Akbar in the sense that he says that affinity is a prerequisite for the mashā'ikh. If a person studies the books of the T̲arīqah or of the Sufis, and then seats himself to train murīds solely for the sake of power and authority, then it will be most destructive for him. This is because the desire for name and fame is h̲arām. Therefore, the thing which is a prelude and means for it will also be h̲arām. Thus, it is h̲arām to study the books of Sufism without an affinity with this science.

Affinity is acquired from those who already have it. Consequently, when the mashā'ikh observe affinity in a person they consider him to be worthy and grant him permission just as they refuse permission to a

person who is unworthy. Now when a worthy person reads their books, it will be beneficial to him.

The Sufis stress affinity and companionship because the spiritual conditions which develop in a person through affinity and companionship are very strong and productive. As for the person who learns a few things merely by reading books and appears to have acquired some spiritual conditions, his conditions are temporary. It cannot be said when and at which point they will leave him.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that taqwā is of two types. One is genuine taqwā which is acquired by remaining in the service of the saints. The other is text-book taqwā. In other words, a person reads a few books and develops a few good conditions within him. These conditions are temporary and superficial; they cannot be relied upon.

Knowledge must be coupled with affinity

It is one thing for a person to have only text-book knowledge, and another thing for him to be embellished by that knowledge and to have affinity with it in his heart. There is a world of difference between the two. However, there is no doubt that many seniors erred in this regard and assumed that mere knowledge of a thing means that one is embellished by it. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā was a great scholar. I came across his story in a certain book. He went to visit a saint. When he was about to depart, he left behind one of his friends with the following instruction: "When I leave, you must see what the shaykh says about me, and inform me." After some days, Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wrote to his friend and asked: "Did the shaykh say anything about me?" He replied that he did not say anything. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā wrote back:

“Okay, you must ask the shaykh about me. Ask him what he thinks of Bū ʿAlī Sīnā.” When he was asked, the shaykh said: “Bū ʿAlī Sīnā is a scholarly person but he does not have good character.” The man wrote to Bū ʿAlī Sīnā and quoted the shaykh’s words to him. Bū ʿAlī Sīnā then wrote a voluminous book on the science of character, sent it to his friend and asked him to present it to the shaykh. The shaykh concluded that this was in response to his previous statement, so he said: “I did not say that Bū ʿAlī Sīnā does not have knowledge of character; I said he does not have good character. In other words, he is not embellished with good character.”

Did you see! Even a senior scholar like Bū ʿAlī Sīnā could not differentiate between knowledge and practice. I related this incident to demonstrate that it is one thing to have knowledge of character and ethics, and something else to be embellished by character. Understand well that to be embellished one will have to remain in the company of the saints. This is the major difference between now and past times. Previously full importance was given to the company of the mashā’ikh. Now, the scholars feel that mere study of their books is enough, while the laity think that merely visiting the mashā’ikh and having physical proximity with them without any insight is enough. The consequences are before you to see.

Just look at how great and insightful the saints of the past used to be. Have people of today reached any great heights solely by reading books? They feel that the madrasah is enough and there is no need for the mashā’ikh. Whereas, if the madrasah is the place to acquire knowledge, the mashā’ikh are there to teach you how to embellish yourself with that knowledge. The mashā’ikh are like clinics. Just as that <u>h</u>akīm

sāhib [mentioned at the beginning of this discussion] had said that medicine was destroyed by the disappearance of clinics, in the same manner, the science of tasawwuf and the Tarīqah have been destroyed by the destruction of spiritual clinics.

The steps to acquiring knowledge

The author of *Fath al-Bārī* quotes a statement of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* which really appeals to me. He said:

أول العلم الاستماع، ثم الإنصات، ثم الحفظ، ثم العمل، ثم النشر

Knowledge commences with listening to what the teacher is saying, to remain silent while he is speaking – i.e. do not interrupt his speech – then to memorize what he said or to discuss and revise it with fellow classmates, then to practise on it, and finally to convey it to others.

The reason why this statement appealed to me is that it caused an entire chapter of knowledge to be opened to me. People constantly come to me, and the thought comes to me that I speak on various themes to them, I read the Qur'ān to them, I read the Ahādīth, I relate the stories of the saints. Despite all this, I do not see it having any effect on them. In the light of the statement of Hadrat Sufyān Thaurī *rahimahullāh* I understood the reason for this. The reason why they are not practising is that knowledge itself is not reaching them. And this is because the first step (listening to the teacher and shaykh with full attention and focus) is not present in them. When people come across a lecturer and assemble around him, they do not do it because they firmly believe in him and have faith in him. It is never easy to have full conviction and faith in a person. In today's times it is even more

difficult because when you accept someone, you have to do it with your heart and mind. In other words, there has to be insight and recognition in the heart, and understanding and intelligence in the mind. It is through these qualities that a person can recognize another and then accept him and have faith in him. Today there is neither understanding, conviction and insight. How, then, can such acceptance be of any use? In this world of cause and effect, insight and understanding are acquired through the company of the mashā'ikh. A person remains in the company of intelligent people, observes their life-conditions, and listens to and understands their words. In this way, he gradually becomes a man of intelligence and insight himself. This is not confined to Dīn but to every branch of knowledge. That is, when a person remains in the company of an expert, he imbibes some of his expertise.

The meaning of "we hear and we obey"

In Dīn, "we hear and we obey" is the fundamental. In fact, even "we obey" is a branch of "we hear" because if a person does not hear in the first place, how will he obey? It is probably for this reason that Hadrat Hājī Imdādullāh Sāhib *rahimahullāh* said that a shaykh has to have a tongue and a murīd has to have ears. Allāh *taʿālā* too maintained this natural sequence where a child first hears and speaks later on. Doctors say that the one who is dumb is also deaf. He cannot hear the sounds and voices because of his deafness, and cannot learn words. This is why he does not speak as well. Allāh *taʿālā* quotes a statement of the unbelievers which they will make when they are in the Hell-fire:

وَقَالُوْا لَوْ كُنَّا نَسْمَعُ أَوْ نَعْقِلُ مَا كُنَّا فِيْ أَصْحٰبِ السَّعِيْرِ

They will say: "Had we listened or understood, we would not have been among the inmates of Hell."[1]

In other words, had we listened to the teachings of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* with the ears of acceptance, and understood as was done by people of proper understanding, we would not have been with the inmates of Hell today. Since these are the qualities of the people of knowledge, this would mean: If we were also people of knowledge, we would have understood whatever we were required to understand, and practised on them. In this way we would have gained salvation from the Hell-fire.

See how the unbelievers will express remorse for not having listened to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*! Nowadays we see students of the madāris going to acquire knowledge and frequenting the mashā'ikh but do not listen when they go there. I am not saying this just like that but after experiencing and seeing it for myself. A major cause for the destruction of knowledge and practice nowadays is not listening. I present a letter of a student to prove my claim. He writes:

> I am presently studying *Bukhārī Sharīf*. However, H̲ad̲rat I have to say that when the teacher completes his lesson, I forget what he said. The same thing happens to me for the other books as well. When I open my book, I feel sleepy. I am at a loss as to how study

He adds:

> I read in a certain book that H̲ad̲rat Imām Shāfiʿī *rah̲imahullāh* complained to his

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[1] Sūrah al-Mulk, 67: 10.

teacher, H̲ad̲rat Wakīʿ *rah̲imahullāh*, about his bad memory. Imām Shāfiʿī *rah̲imahullāh* wrote the following couplets in this regard:

شكوت إلى وكيع سوء حفظي – فأوصاني إلى ترك المعاصي

فإن العلم نور من اله – ونور الله لا يُعطى لعاصي

I complained to my teacher, H̲ad̲rat Wakīʿ rah̲imahullāh, about my bad memory. He advised me to stay away from sins because knowledge is a light from Allāh taʿālā, and Allāh's light is not given to a sinner.

Now in order to give up sins, what actions should I choose so that my bad memory comes to an end and I develop other capabilities?

I wrote back and said:

Many people quote the couplets of Imām Shāfiʿī *rah̲imahullāh*. I feel that they write it without understanding it completely. Can there be any comparison between the conditions of Imām Shāfiʿī *rah̲imahullāh* and ours? Is it necessary that we do the same actions which Imām Shāfiʿī *rah̲imahullāh* did? Those were the internal spiritual conditions of the seniors and saints. We must not vie with them. As for the forgetfulness which you experience, it is an external and bodily illness. It is caused by a weak mind, and the treatment for it is taking care of your health, eating

> healthy foods, and consuming fortifying medicines. The same weakness of the mind is a cause of sleep. Sleep is undoubtedly an obstacle to knowledge, especially so when lessons are in progress. It is essential to treat this or else it will result in deprivation of knowledge. After all, if a student sleeps while the lessons are carrying on, what will he hear? If he does not hear anything, he will not understand. How, then, will knowledge come to him? Therefore, instead of pondering over the conditions of Imām Shāfiʿī *rahimahullāh*, you should refer to a good doctor and have your weak mind treated. I too am making duʿā' for your good health. Was salām.

This is the condition of our students. He is not the only one. There will be many others like him. This is the condition of the madāris. The condition of other places is no different. We see people frequenting the mashā'ikh but learning nothing from them. In other words, they do not change their ways despite going to the mashā'ikh for years upon years. They are ready to attend to the saints and serve them, but do not want to acquire anything from them. I feel this also has to do with their incorrect beliefs. They think that the mashā'ikh are only interested in their services. Therefore, no sooner they massage their feet, the mashā'ikh will be pleased with them and they will become their close associates. And once they do this a few times, they will be eligible for khilāfat.

Nowadays people believe the mashā'ikh to be the objectives. They do not want the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā* but the pleasure of the mashā'ikh. After

understanding these conditions of the people, I say very often, if you want to listen and understand, then sit in the assembly. If not, do not waste your time unnecessarily. But the people do not listen to even this. They neither move away, nor do they listen and practise. In fact, I go to the extent of saying: I am teaching you a ruling of the Sharīʿat and fiqh that a person must only go to such places with the intention of listening and practising.

How unfortunate that a person is able to find such places but still does not attach himself to Dīn, and does not take the work for which these places have been established. This is the destruction of such a place. I also say to them occasionally: You have already corrupted all other places, now you want to corrupt this place as well! I noticed some benefit in saying these things, but because the temperaments have become so corrupt, this is why they are unable to understand even that which is correct and true. It is the coming and going of this nature which I refer to "falling on the body" [without benefiting spiritually]. There are many people of this nature nowadays. The entire loss and damage is due to lack of knowledge. Knowledge is obtained through listening. The situation with regard to listening is as I already described to you. The sad thing is that there is no one to tell the people of the ailments which they are suffering from. Obviously, when people are not informed about an ailment, how will they know what it is?

People come here to learn taṣawwuf. But I see that things like spiritual conditions and stations, affinity and tranquillity, love and recognition, spiritual ecstasy, etc. are far beyond them. They do not even know the basics. A long period of time passes in teaching them the basics. For example, take this

subject of “listening and understanding”, did you hear anyone speaking about it? After speaking about it for so long, you must have realized its importance by now.

Concern for rectification of the ummat

What can I tell you? Do you know how much of fatigue and discomfort I have to endure to teach these basics? Especially when I see a person causing harm to himself because of his own lack of understanding. During my stay in Mumbai, there were two Maulwī S̲āh̲ib’s who were associated with me for quite some time. I came to know that they are slightly deaf. I said to them: “If you cannot hear what I say, what will you understand? If you do not understand, what are you going to put into action? If you are not going to practise, what is the benefit of coming to me?” I also said to them: “You have been frequenting me for so long. Leave aside acquiring Dīnī benefits and spiritual excellences, you could not even acquire worldly benefits through me. So many h̲akīms and doctors come to me. You could have informed me about your deafness and I would have spoken to them to have you treated.”

I took both of them to task. Subsequently, one of them wrote to a h̲akīm in which he described his condition and asked him for *it̲rīfal*[1]. The other one obtained some medicine from Dr. Is-h̲āq S̲āh̲ib. When the doctor asked him if there is any improvement, he replied: “I am now able to hear a bit.”

There was another man from Kānpūr who said: “My son is deaf, and is therefore dumb. I want to call him

[1] A compound medicine comprising of a few herbs.

here [Mumbai] to have him operated.” I said: “Call for him.” When he came to Mumbai, the doctor checked him and said that he still has a certain power of hearing. There is no need for him to have an operation. All he needs is a hearing aid, and he will be able to hear clearly. Subsequently, the hearing aid was bought and attached to his ear. He sat in front of me and I spoke to him. When I asked him if he heard what I said, he smiled and said: “I can hear.”

There are many incidents of this nature. I related a few examples to show you that the reason why people are not benefiting from the Ṯarīqah is to be found within themselves. It is not because of a defect in the Ṯarīqah or the mashā’ikh. Listen to one more story.

There was a person who used to be in my company and from whom I used to take services. He was sitting with me one day when the qārī s̲āẖib’s small child came in and said: “I came to take the grapes which are in the cupboard.” I thought to myself that I should tell this man to give it to the child. But I immediately thought that he might do something wrong, so I asked the child to take the grapes himself. However, the cupboard was a bit high and he could not reach. Just then the man said that he will give it to the child. I thought to myself that since he is offering himself, he must be knowing what to give. So I said, “Okay, give it to him.” He got up, went to the cupboard and began looking at everything from one side. I realized that he did not understand what he had to give, and therefore did not even hear what the child said. Furthermore, his pride did not permit him to ask me what to give to the child. I eventually had to get up myself, go to the cupboard and give the grapes to the child. I then asked the man to leave.

You people are listening to these stories and laughing, and probably thinking that they are insignificant. They may appear insignificant, but they stem from internal ailments and are quite serious. Not hearing something is not so serious because it could stem from deafness. When I questioned some of them, they acknowledged their ailment. Some of them said they can hear with one ear and not the other. I placed my hand on the head of some of them and asked: "Can you hear with this?" In other words, you are saying that you cannot hear properly, but what about your level of understanding? If a person has a hearing deficiency, he must get it treated because the first step is to be able to hear.

There is a spiritual ailment in this regard as well. A person does not listen attentively because of negligence and disregard. This is extremely serious. What is the benefit of coming here? Now I have to explain so simple things to people. If a person does not hear a point properly, he must request for it to be repeated. But people are not prepared to do even this much. This stems from their internal pride. They feel that if they ask for a point to be repeated, they will be reprimanded for not listening the first time. The carnal self feels humiliated by this. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

You people must be thinking that I am living very comfortably, while I am immersed in this quandary by night and day. It is very easy to become a saint or to make someone a saint. But it is extremely difficult to become a man and to teach character to a person. The lofty objectives of the Ṯarīqah – i.e. genuine affinity and tranquillity with Allāh *taʿālā*, spiritual stations, etc. – these will come much later. All my time is spent in teaching things which are not only considered

essential by the Sharīʿat but by ordinary intelligence as well.

Educating and training is difficult

From this entire discussion you must have learnt this much that teaching and training is a difficult job. It is much more difficult to direct people's attention towards character and ethics. We have to teach them simple and basic things about the etiquette of living at home. Each person has to be continuously supervised. When many people frequent a place, they will obviously be of various temperaments and capabilities. There will be wealthy and influential people among them. There will also be poor people. There will be students and ʿulamā' as well. There will be those who have acquired western education and those who are ignorant villagers. Each person develops his own temperament according to the environment in which he lives. You can therefore well imagine how difficult it is to understand each one separately and to treat each one on an individual basis.

Only a person who is ordered by Allāh *taʿālā* will be able to accomplish this task. Anyone else cannot do it. Therefore, as long as a person is not taught and trained according to his temperament, advising him will not be of any benefit. In fact, it may well happen that because it is not in line with his temperament, it will be harmful to him. In short, rectification and training is no play; it requires acumen. It is essential for a mentor to be affectionate and concerned; and he must be forever worried about the rectification of his associates. This will most certainly result in mental fatigue. After all, he will always be thinking about how to treat a certain person's ailment, what should be said to him, how he should be approached, how his

self must be instilled towards rectification, and so on. A lot of time and effort have to be spent on each person. Who has the time for this, and the courage to put his heart and mind into such inconvenience? And who has the worry about the sorrow of others? This is why this task is becoming difficult nowadays. You will see that even the places which were established exclusively for rectification no longer have rectification in them. They have now become centres of trials and tribulations. Show me just one spiritual clinic which is fulfilling its duties. When the clinic itself became corrupt, the science of taṯawwuf departed.

Taṯawwuf was destroyed by the destruction of spiritual clinics

This is exactly what that ẖakīm ṯāẖib [mentioned in the beginning] had said, viz. medicine was destroyed by the destruction of the clinic. And I am saying that the science of taṯawwuf has been destroyed by inattention to companionship. Or, to put it in another way, by the destruction of the spiritual clinic (the khānqāh). You have seen in the light of conditions and incidents that the khānqāh was destroyed when people paid no attention to its principles and prerequisites. And worst of all, the most fundamental prerequisite – listening, understanding and accepting – has disappeared. The following statement of the mashā'ikh is most applicable:

حرموا الوصول لتضييعهم الأصول

People have been deprived from reaching Allāh taʿālā because they disregarded the principles.

Note: Ḫaḏrat Muṯliẖul Ummat *raẖimahullāh* mentioned most important and essential points on the subject of rectification and training. These ought to be considered by not only every seeker but by every

Muslim. We must constantly make duʿā’ that Allāh *taʿālā* enables us to practise according to the principles shown to us by H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*, and that He blesses us with rectitude, rectification and affinity with Allāh *taʿālā*. Āmīn.

(Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī)

FOLLOWING THE SUNNAT RESULTS IN ALLĀH'S LOVE

While on the subject of the need to follow Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam, Hadrat Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* quotes the following verse in his *Futūh al-Ghayb*:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللّٰهُ

Say (O Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam): If you love Allāh (and you want Allāh taʿālā to confer you with His proximity) then follow me, Allāh will love you.[1]

Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* then provides a most beautiful explanation. Listen with your heart. Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādīr Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* is the shaykh of the mashā'ikh and one of the seniors in our spiritual lineage. Countless people reached Allāh *taʿālā* through him and are still doing so. The statements of seniors of this nature are worthy of emulation and acceptance. He says:

فبين أن طريق المحبة اتباعه قولا وفعلا

Allāh *taʿālā* explained in this verse that the manner of acquiring the love of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is to follow the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in words and actions.

Hadrat Maulānā ʿAbd al-Haq Muhaddith Dehlawī *rahimahullāh* goes into an excellent explanation of this statement of the shaykh. He says that if a person can achieve following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa*

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

sallam in his words and actions, he will be able to realize following him in his conditions as well. Hadrat does not speak about conditions, this is why it was necessary to mention it. After all, the fundamental thing to do is to emulate Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in his conditions. However, this is not possible without first following him in his words and actions. Shaykh ʿĀrif Muslih ad-Dīn Saʿdī Shīrāzī *rahimahullāh* says:

> O Saʿdī! Never think that you will acquire guidance without following Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Anyone who treads a path which is different from the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never reach the destination.

A spiritual condition is the result of emulation. Spiritual conditions are bestowals [from Allāh *taʿālā*] and are the fruits of actions. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالَّذِيْنَ جَاهَدُوْا فِيْنَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا، وَإِنَّ اللهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Those who strive in Our cause – We will certainly show them Our paths. Allāh is most certainly with the doers of good.[1]

The reason for love is either beauty or kindness

Love refers to the inclination and attraction of the self towards something which is believed to be perfect, and which becomes a catalyst for closeness to it. The reason for love is either beauty or kindness. Both these qualities are confined to Allāh *taʿālā*. If they are found anywhere else, then they are bestowals from Allāh *taʿālā* Himself.

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[1] Sūrah al-ʿAnkabūt, 29: 69.

The greatest and most glittering manifestation of Allāh's beauty and kindness is none other than Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. After him, it is to be found in other Auliyā' according to the extent of their emulation and steadfastness.

Love is another name for that inclination and attraction which was mentioned above. Obedience and compliance which are the causes of closeness are essential for love. Without them love is defective, and claims to perfection in this regard are wrong. Yes, love in itself cannot be rejected because Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said:

لا تلعنوه فإنه يحب الله ورسوله

Do not curse him (because of his sin) because he loves Allāh and His Messenger.

This is why the 'ulamā' explain the love which a servant has for Allāh *taʿālā* as "a will to obey Him". And the love which Allāh *taʿālā* has for His servant as "pleasure" which is manifested as Allāh's kindness, affection and inspiration. This is because we cannot attribute inclination and attraction – which are effects – to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a cause of Allāh' love because the one who follows him will certainly reach the level and rank of love and being beloved. A Hadīth makes reference to this:

المرء مع من أحبّ

A person will be with the one whom he loves.

No one can reach the station on which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is because his station is the highest and most superior, but its extent is wide.

There are many levels and ranks in this station. It is the bond of love which takes and conveys a person. A poet says:

> We can never reach the level on which you are. Our conveyance too has fallen down on the path of our search. However we are with you by day and night. We are at your door while you are in our hearts.

Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the absolute human who is to be followed and obeyed. Obedience to him is obligatory as stated by Allāh *taʿālā*:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say (O Muhammad sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam): If you love Allāh (and you want Allāh taʿālā to confer you with His proximity) then follow me.[1]

In like manner, Allāh *taʿālā* said:

اَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ

Obey Allāh and His Messenger.[2]

We learn the obligation of obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from this verse as well. This is because the word "obey" is an order, and an order shows obligation. There are many other similar verses from which the obligation of obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is learnt. It is this very same obedience which Allāh *taʿālā* lays down as the criterion of His love. The idolaters, Jews and

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

[2] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 20.

Christians all claimed to love Allāh *taʿālā*, but Allāh *taʿālā* rejected their claims and laid down such a criterion which none of them could fulfil. The criterion was: If you claim to love Allāh *taʿālā* then follow and obey Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. This clearly shows that love is the cause of obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. And following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a clear proof of Allāh's love. Thus, the one who blows the trumpet of love without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is a mere claimant whose claim is wrong, and whose case is defeated by Allāh's order: "then follow me." This is why the seniors of every era laid down the need to follow the Sharīʿat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, made it obligatory on themselves and their associates to follow and obey Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, and encouraged towards it. Shaykh Maulānā ʿAbd al-Quddūs Gangohī *rahimahullāh* says:

> The one who does not tread the path of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will not reach even the outskirts of this court.

Look at the importance and need for following and obeying Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as learnt from this couplet. No matter how high ranking a person may be, he cannot do without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In fact, no one can even reach any rank and position without following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. All the saints and elders of Dīn were able to reach Allāh *taʿālā* solely through emulating and following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If a person tries to reach Allāh's court without this, he will not

gain the slightest entry. He will be pushed aside and expelled.

The level and rank which a person will enjoy in the Hereafter will depend on his level of following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in this world. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the most. He loved Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and had a bond with him even before Islam. He never belied Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* on any occasion. He bore untold miseries and hardships for him. This is why he was given the title of "Siddīq" in this world. As for the position which he will be honoured with in the Hereafter, it is beyond description. The differences in rank which we see among the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* is also based on the differences in emulating Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Understand this well.

Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Yaʿqūb Sāhib *rahimahullāh*, the head teacher at Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband, describes the need for following the Sunnat in the following words:

> The path of acceptance is confined to following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* externally, internally and in beliefs. Turning away from bidʿāt and customs in today's times is the essence of following the Sunnat.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the comprehensive and concise manner in which he conveyed this theme. It encompasses everything and leaves out nothing. However, intelligence and equity are prerequisites.

Incidents related to following the Sunnat

I now quote a few incidents related to following the Sunnat which are established from our seniors. Inshā Allāh they will make it easy for you to understand the reality of following the Sunnat.

There was a saint who was always overcome by the greatness of Allāh *taʿālā*. People felt intimidated by him so they abstained from going to him. On one occasion his moustache had grown quite a bit and it is against the Sharīʿat and Sunnat to have a big moustache. Another saint who was strict in following the Sunnat took the courage to go to him with a scissor. He held his beard with one hand and clipped his moustache with the other. When he came to his senses and saw what happened, he expressed joy, and repeatedly held his beard and kissed it. And he said out of genuine pride: "This beard was held once in the path of the Sharīʿat of Muh̲ammad *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*."

Look at the extent of his following the Sunnat. He did not feel offended in the least. Instead, he expressed his joy as described above. We too ought to emulate him in this regard. That is, we must accept the truth. There is always good and benefit in it.

All I want to do is make clear to you the importance of following the Sunnat. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable you to understand it. A person performed s̲alāh with much humility and humbleness. That night he saw a dream in which his s̲alāh appeared in the form of a beautiful woman, but she had no eyes. He went and related this dream to a saint.[1] The saint asked: "Did you by

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[1] The saint referred to was most probably H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*.

chance perform your salāh with your eyes closed?" The man replied: "Yes, I performed it like that so that there is more humility in my salāh." The saint said: "This is why she had no eyes. It is Sunnat to perform salāh with your eyes open. You performed it against the Sunnat, this is why you saw what you saw."

Just think! He left out one Sunnat but was deprived in this manner!

The virtues and benefits of practising on the Sunnat

Marāqī al-Falāh, a well-known book of jurisprudence contains the following Hadīth:

قال صلى الله عليه وسلم من صلى ركعتي الفجر أي سنته في بيته يوسع له في رزقه، يقل المنازع بينه وبين أهله، ويختتم له بالإيمان.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam said: The person who performs two rak'ats Sunnat of the fajr salāh in his house will experience expansion in his sustenance, arguments between him and his family will decrease, and he will depart from this world with īmān.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the immense benefits of performing just the Sunnat salāh at home. How much more benefits and virtues there must be for performing both the Sunnat salāh [at home] and the fard salāh in the masjid! Just ponder over these three benefits. Which of our Dīnī and worldly needs can be considered to be small? There will be expansion in one's sustenance. Mutual disputes and arguments will decrease. This is because even if a person has sustenance but there are constant arguments at home, then life will be quite bitter. There will be enjoyment in life. A person will not enjoy peace and tranquillity even if he has some wealth and riches.

Our master Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that by reading the Sunnat of fajr salāh at home, mutual arguments and disputes will decrease. Look at the arrangement which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* made for our worldly livelihood, and what a simple way he showed to us. As for success in the Hereafter, he explained that as well. That if we do this, we will depart from this world with īmān. After that there will be nothing but comfort. In this way, success in this world and in the Hereafter will be achieved. This is the result of practising on just one Sunnat.

O Muslims! If you practise on all the Sunnats of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, just think of how many virtues you will acquire, and what success you will enjoy in this world and in the Hereafter.

Now listen to one more Hadīth which ʿAllāmah Nawawī *rahimahullāh* quotes in *Kitāb al-Adhkār*:

عن عمر بن الخطاب رضي الله عنه أن رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: مَنْ دَخَلَ السُّوْقَ فَقَالَ لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ، وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمُوْتُ، بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ، وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ، كتب الله له ألف ألف حسنة، ومحا عنه ألف ألف سيئة، ورفع ألف ألف درجة.[1]

Hadrat ʿUmar radiyallāhu ʿanhu narrates that Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: When a person enters a market place/shopping area and reads the following supplication, Allāh taʿālā records one

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[1] مستدرك حاكم، ج ١، ص ٧٢٢، حديث ١٩٧٤، الفتوحات الربانية على الأذكار النووية، ج ٦، ص ١٢٦، باب ما يقول إذا دخل السوق.

million rewards for him, wipes out one million sins from him, and raises his rank by one million.

The duʿā' is:

لَا اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللهُ وَحْدَهُ، لَا شَرِيْكَ لَهُ، لَهُ الْمُلْكُ، وَلَهُ الْحَمْدُ، يُحْيِيْ وَيُمِيْتُ، وَهُوَ حَيٌّ لَا يَمُوْتُ، بِيَدِهِ الْخَيْرُ، وَهُوَ عَلٰى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيْرٌ.

There is none worthy of worship except Allāh, He is alone. He has no partner. His is the kingdom and for Him is all praise. He gives life and causes death. He is ever-living and does not die. All good is in His control, and He has power over everything.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Look at the virtue of this kalimah as proven from this Hadīth! It will be most astonishing if we still do not practise on it. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone. (compiler)

There are many Ahādīth of this nature. If you were to listen and understand, you will fall in love with Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the injunctions of the Sharīʿat. The manner of achieving this is to ponder over the injunctions of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. You will then realize the immense reward which Allāh *taʿālā* has awarded to the ummat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* for even the smallest deeds. Understand further that the hardships which were imposed on the previous nations have been cancelled and abrogated for the ummat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Moreover, since Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is the chief of all the Prophets, you are the best of all nations. Can this virtue be considered to be insignificant? Should we not be prepared to sacrifice ourselves for Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and his pure Sharīʿat?

We brought a lot of misfortune upon ourselves by disobeying Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and acting against his injunctions. We discarded his injunctions related to our social relationships and caused destruction to our worldly life. Mutual harmony and unity have departed. Tranquillity of the heart is no longer found. These things are clearly known and visible to all. What, then, can be said about the Hereafter?

Let's get together and follow the Messenger

Now let's get together and follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* so that we obtain the blessings of the Sunnat and we acquire the comfort and tranquillity of our Dīnī and worldly life. Whatever worldly and religious good we can obtain can only be done through Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. It is therefore essential for us to please Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and acquire his recognition.

When we make someone our shaykh and mentor, it is so that he can enable us to truly recognize Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A shaykh is followed because he has followed Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he knows the ways of following him.

When the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* visited Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, it was not just a physical visit. Rather, they recognized his knowledge and spirituality, and acted accordingly. This is why they acquired such noble virtues. The unbelievers and hypocrites also visited and met Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* physically, but they did not affirm him and did not believe in him. This is why their visit did not provide them with any

benefit. Instead, they became even more eligible for castigation and punishment.

The type of emulation and obedience displayed by the S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* is unparalleled. Study the lives of the auliyā' who came after them and see how they followed Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* in every matter. It has been the continuous practice of the saints to give permission for the continuation of their work only to those who were most conscious of following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The auliyā' are the deputies of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In fact, they are the deputies of Allāh *taʿālā*. The author of *Tars̲īʿ al-Jawāhir al-Makkīyyah* says:

الشيوخ نُوَّاب الله

The mashā'ikh are Allāh's deputies on earth.

One cannot be independent of the speech of Allāh and Rasūlullāh

The speech of any person or the poetry of any poet – no matter how excellent it may be – cannot make a person independent of the speech of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Even if you develop a taste for the writings of linguists and poets, and you become an expert in this field, you can never be independent of pondering over the speech of Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The demand to ponder and reflect over their words will remain. You can traverse the path of Allāh *taʿālā* only by following and obeying Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Allāh *taʿālā* set His seal on this fact and made it obligatory until the day of Resurrection. This is why it is essential to follow him in every matter. If we are to follow anyone else, it will be solely on the

basis that he follows Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. In other words, that person must have obliterated his own views and opinions for those of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. If he allows his own views to interfere, it is not permissible to follow such a person.

This topic is quite long. How much more can we speak on it or write on it. Even voluminous books will not suffice. Nevertheless, you must have understood this much from this short speech that it is essential for every Muslim to follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. There is no alternative to it.

We quoted the statement of H̲ad̲rat Sayyidunā ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rah̲imahullāh* when he said that it is obligatory to follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* if we want to reach the level of acceptance and close proximity to Allāh *taʿālā*, and that all other paths are sealed.

H̲ad̲rat Junayd *rah̲imahullāh* said:

الطرق كلها مسدودة إلا من اقتفى أثر رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم.

All paths are sealed except the path of the one who follows in the footsteps of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.

Without this, no one can reach Allāh's court. H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ ad-Dīn Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* says in his *Būstān*:

> The one who follows a path which is against the path of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will never be able to reach the destination.

Was salām.

RECTIFICATION OF THE SELF

A Maulānā Sāhib from a large institution wrote to me saying: "I heard Hadrat Wālā quoting the following text from *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah* on several occasions. I happened to read it myself, and when I did, my love for Hadrat Wālā increased and the greatness of your teachings became clear to me." The text reads as follows:

> Be fully convinced of this fact that if a person possesses thousands of virtues and performs countless supernatural feats, but is lax in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then the love and company of such a person is a most toxic poison. If a person does not possess any virtue and cannot perform a single supernatural act, but is firm in his obedience to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then his love and company will be a most beneficial panacea.[1]

The Maulānā Sāhib also wrote that the mashā'ikh of today seem to be lax in their adherence to the Sunnat and following of the Sharīʿat. This is why we cannot benefit from their company as we should.

I replied to him saying: Bearing in mind what you wrote, the reason why people are not benefiting is that true and genuine benefit is when a person is able to free himself from the influences of his carnal self. However, I see that let alone freeing themselves from

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[1] Translation of maktūb number 67, vol. 2, addressed to Khwājah Dīnār.

the self and rectifying it, people do not even speak on the subject of the carnal self. This, despite the fact that Allāh *taʿālā* makes mention of it in the Qur'ān. He says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his self from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

قَدْ اَفْلَحَ مَنْ زَكّٰهَا وَقَدْ خَابَ مَنْ دَسّٰهَا

He who purified it has indeed achieved his goal. He who leaves it buried in the dust has indeed failed.[2]

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ، اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil.[3]

These were the statements of the Qur'ān. Now observe what the Aḫādīth say in this regard:

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said:

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

We learn from the above that the self is something which exists and which a person has to be careful of. However, we see nowadays that let alone the laity, even the elite seem to deny the self through their

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40.

[2] Sūrah ash-Shams, 91: 9-10.

[3] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

actions. If it is disregarded to such an extent, how will people understand the tricks and plots of the self? And how will they save themselves from it? Imām Ghazzālī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* states in *I<u>h</u>yā' al-'Ulūm* that it is obligatory to be wary of it. He writes:

وأغمض أنواع علوم المعاملة الوقوف على خدع النفس ومكائد الشيطان، وذلك فرض عين على كل عبد، وقد أهمله الخلق واشتغلوا بعلوم تستجر إليهم الوسواس، وتسلط عليهم الشيطان، وتنسيهم عدواته وطريق الإحتراز عنه.[1]

The most intricate of the sciences of interactions is the deceptions of the carnal self and the traps of Shay<u>t</u>ān. This is obligatory on every person, but people have disregarded it and become occupied with sciences which create whisperings in their hearts, enable Shay<u>t</u>ān to take control of them, and cause them to forget his enmity and the manner of safeguarding them from him.

We learn from the above that the science of deceptions of the self and traps of Shay<u>t</u>ān is the most intricate, subtle and complex of sciences. This is why it is generally disregarded. After all, it is easy for anyone and everyone to understand things which are glaring and clear. On the other hand, complex and intricate matters can be understood only the one who has perfect insight and a genuine quest. As for the one who has no insight at all or there is a defect in his quest, he will not be inspired to save himself from the traps of Shay<u>t</u>ān and the deceptions of the carnal self.

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[1] إحياء العلوم، ج ٣، ص ٣٣.

Whether it is difficult or easy, Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* says that it is compulsory for every person, just as the compulsion of salāh and zakāh. If man does not know this, he will succumb to whisperings. Shaytān will overpower him, he will not be aware of Shaytān's enmity, and will not know how to save himself from him. Consequently, he will suffer losses in this world and in the Hereafter. The following verse will apply to him:

خَسِرَ الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةَ ط ذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْخُسْرَانُ الْمُبِيْنُ

He loses both this world and the Hereafter. This is a clear loss.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاعْبُدُوا اللهَ وَلَا تُشْرِكُوْا بِهِ شَيْئًا وَّبِالْوَالِدَيْنِ إِحْسَانًا وَّبِذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْيَتٰمٰى وَالْمَسٰكِيْنِ وَالْجَارِ ذِي الْقُرْبٰى وَالْجَارِ الْجُنُبِ وَالصَّاحِبِ بِالْجَنْبِ وَابْنِ السَّبِيْلِ لا وَمَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُكُمْ ط إِنَّ اللهَ لَا يُحِبُّ مَنْ كَانَ مُخْتَالًا فَخُوْرًا.

Worship Allāh and do not associate anything with Him. Do good to parents, relatives, orphans, the poor, the neighbour who is a relative, the neighbour who is a stranger, the companion by your side, the traveller, and what your hands possess, i.e. your slave-girls. Surely Allāh does not like the self-conceited and boastful.[2]

In keeping with the temperament of the Sufis, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the words "the

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[1] Sūrah al-Hajj, 22: 11.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 36.

companion by your side" to refer to the carnal self. He presents the Hadīth quoted previously as proof, i.e.

أعدى عدوك نفسك التي بين جنبيك

Your worst enemy is your carnal self which is within you.

Since the verse instructs us to do good to all those mentioned, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* says that the good which one has to do by one's self is:

أن تحبسها في سجن العبودية وتحرقها بنيران المحبة[1]

To confine it in the prison of servitude and burn it with the fire of love.

Fulfilling the duties of servitude

Confining the carnal self in the prison of servitude means that it must be made to adhere to the duties of servitude. In other words, it must follow the Sharīʿat and adopt the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. However, this is not easily achieved; it will need a catalyst and that catalyst is love. Love for Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* will have to be developed in the heart, and a true bond with Allāh *taʿālā* will have to be established. This is known as nisbat or affinity. After this it will become easy for the person to fulfil the duties of servitude. In other words, he will be able to imprison himself in the prison of servitude. The company of the mashā'ikh is the tried and tested way of acquiring that catalyst and affinity. A person remains in their service and acquires internal excellence. The 'ulamā' and

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[1] روح المعاني، سورة النساء، آية ٣٦ (من باب الإشارة).

mashā'ikh presented proofs and evidences for this. A major proof which everyone can understand is as explained by Qāḏī Thanā'ullāh S̲āh̲ib Pānīpattī *rah̲imahullāh* in *Irshād at̲-T̲ālibīn*:

> An extremely large group of people (regarding whom it is considered impossible that it could have fabricated a lie, and whose every member is of such a level of piety and knowledge that it is not permissible to accuse him of lying) states both verbally and in writing: By virtue of the company of the mashā'ikh – whose companionship goes from one generation to the next until it reaches Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – they developed a new internal condition. This new condition caused them to develop a love for Allāh *taʿālā* and His friends, an enthusiasm for good deeds, inspiration for righteous actions, and firmness in true beliefs. This is that condition which ought to be referred to as an excellence, which in turn is a cause of many other excellences.[1]

The objective of the company of the mashā'ikh

Companionship results in love, and love enables a person to fulfil the duties of servitude. When man progresses in this regard, he acquires maʿrifat. In other words, he is able to show kindness to his carnal self by removing it from its deceptions and arrogance, and enabling it to recognize Allāh *taʿālā*. This is what I was referring to when I said that you neither know the prison of servitude nor do you understand the scale of

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[1] *Tuh̲fatus Sālikīn*, p. 6.

love. Instead, in today's times you consider kindness to the carnal self to mean giving it a full share of authority and wealth, and shower it with the joys of the self. All benefit came to an end ever since this became the condition of the Ṯarīqah.

Claims have replaced the reality

Shaykh Akbar *raẖimahullāh* cried over this in his time, and it was the proliferation of such conditions which prompted him to write a book titled *al-Amr al-Muẖkam al-Marbūṯ Fī Mā Yalzam Ahl Ṯarīqillāh Taʿālā Min ash-Shuruṯ* (the decisive and established order on the prerequisites which the people of the Ṯarīqah must adhere to). He writes in the introduction to this book:

فإن الزمان مشحون بالدعاوى الكاذبة العريضة فلا مريد صادق ثابت القدم في سلوكه، ولا شيخ محقق ينصحه فيخرجه من رعونة نفسه وإعجابه برأيه ويعرب له عن طريق الحق، فالمريد يدعي شيخوخة الرياسة، وهذا كله تخبيط وتلبيس.[1]

The times are filled with extensive false claims. There is no murīd who is genuinely firm on his path, and there is no erudite shaykh who can advise the murīd by removing him from the deception of his carnal self and the arrogance of his views; and expounding to him the true path. Consequently, the murīd makes claims to leadership and authority. All this has corrupted the Ṯarīqah and reduced it to a medley of confusion.

Shaykh Akbar *raẖimahullāh* is speaking about the condition in his era. What expectations can we then

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[1] آداب الشيخ والمريد، ص ٨.

have of the people of the Ṯarīqah of today in following the Sunnat and adhering to the Sharīʿat!?

The repugnance and prohibition of false claims

I came across a few teachings of Haḏrat Dhun Nūn Misrī *rahimahullāh* in a certain book. I find that the points which he was warning his people against are to be found in the people of the Ṯarīqah of today. He said:

يا بني صحح حالك مع الله لا يشغلك عنه شاغل. ولا تشتغل بما يقول الخلق منك فإنهم لن يغنوا عنك من الله شيئا. وإذا صحت حالتك مع الله أرشدك للطريق إليه. واقتد بسنة النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم وظاهر العلم، وإياك أن تدعي في ما ليس لك، فما أهلك عامة المريدين إلا الدعاوى. وقال إياك وهذا الأوراد المتصلة فإن النفس تألفها والنظر ما فيه مخالفة نفسك من صيام أو صدقة، فاعملها فإن في متابعة النفس فما ألفت النفس شيئا إلا فيه بلاء وخطر.

Yūsuf ibn Husayn relates: I presented myself before Haḏrat Dhun Nūn Misrī rahimahullāh on one occasion. He said to me: "O son! Set right your condition with Allāh taʿālā and nothing will be able to divert you from it. Do not bother about what people say about you because they will not be of any avail to you before Allāh taʿālā. When your condition with Allāh taʿālā is set right, He will guide you to His path. Follow the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and the outward Sharīʿat. Save yourself against false claims because the murīds in general were destroyed by false claims." He added: "Be wary of the wazīfahs which have been related by the mashā'ikh because the carnal self is inclined to them. Look at those things in

which there is opposition to your self, e.g. fasting or charity, and then do them because submitting to the self in whatever it is inclined to is most certainly a test and a tribulation, because the self only likes the things which put man into danger and tribulation."

وقال له أيضا لا تسكن إلى مدح الناس، ولا تجزع عن قبولهم وردهم، فإنهم قطاع الطريق، واسكن إلى ما يتحققه من أحوالك سرًّا لا علنًا.

He said: "Do not become inclined to the praises of people, and do not be agitated by their acceptance and rejection of you, because they are all highway robbers. You should rather incline to the conditions with which your heart is inclined and experiences tranquillity from, and that too, in privacy, not in public."

Yūsuf adds: He also said:

الخير كله في بيت مفتاحه التواضع، والشر كله في بيت مفتاحه الكبر.

There is nothing but goodness in a house whose key is humility, and there is nothing but evil in a house whose key is pride.

Such were the people of the T̲arīqah of the past and this was their path. That is, they used to make a few simple statements which would be firmly embedded in the hearts of the their audience. Subsequently, this would result in disinclination to the creation, abhorrence of bad character, and an internal spiritual bond with the Creator.

The importance of the pieces of advice of H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn

The words of advice which H̲ad̲rat Dhun Nūn Mis̲rī *rah̲imahullāh* gave to Yūsuf ibn H̲usayn are worthy of being imprinted on the hearts with gold.

When people were embellished by these qualities and practised on those principles – i.e. when they subjugated the carnal self and dyed themselves in the love of Allāh *taʿālā* – they were considered to be spiritual masters and their company was beneficial. Ever since discussions about the carnal self were discarded and a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* was regarded to be unnecessary, the Ṯarīqah was destroyed. Thus, how can the company of such people benefit others in the path of rectification of the self!?

You are most correct when you wrote that the company of people is not beneficial.[1] People have actually put a complete end to the methodology on whose basis companionship is beneficial, viz. obliteration of the carnal self. The carnal self has to be overpowered, a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* has to be established, the self which orders a person towards evil has to be converted to the tranquil self – the self which is at peace with Allāh *taʿālā*. This had been the programme of the seekers. When a person resolved to do this, he received help and assistance from Allāh *taʿālā*, and he would succeed solely out of Allāh's grace and inspiration. H̲ad̲rat Khwājah Muh̲ammad Maʿs̲ūm *rah̲imahullāh* conveys this theme in a most beautiful manner. He writes in *Maktūbāt Maʿs̲ūmīyyah*:

> Man has forgotten his own self because of his absolute immaturity. He has turned a blind eye to his own defects and mischief, and considered himself to be an expert on the basis of his temporary and borrowed capabilities. He feels he is a source of all

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[1] Reference is made to what was said at the beginning of this article. Refer to it. (Muh̲ammad Qamar az-Zamān)

> goodness. He has laid lengthy and extensive foundations on the basis of these unstable conditions and alleged capabilities, and then made claims to equality with his Master [Allāh *taʿālā*] through this path. Consequently, deception, arrogance and selfishness in his carnal self were born from this.
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> The astonishing thing is that the source which is embellished by every type of excellence and beauty is concealed and hidden from the eyes. And the possibilities, of which man is just one member, and which are the sources of every type of defect and mischief are clearly visible and before all to see. When I saw all this, I lost my mind and said: O Allāh! What is this spectacle!?

Khwājah S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* discussed man's misguidance to this point. He now explains how the door of guidance opens to him.

> Based on Allāh's eternal grace and kindness, when a seeker reflects on his own defect – i.e. over the fact that he was non-existent and that his existence is the result of the existence of someone else – and comes to this realization, he realizes that all his capabilities were conferred to him by Allāh *taʿālā*, attributes all his temporary capabilities completely to Allāh *taʿālā*, believes himself to be totally devoid of anything, has full conviction that he was merely a mirror for those excellences, i.e. he was a manifestation of those excellences, while they are intrinsically

> found in Allāh *taʿālā*. When he considers himself to be totally empty and non-existent, he is conferred with true self-obliteration and is freed from the selfishness and evil of his carnal self. In other words, his carnal self which had been ordering him towards evil is gradually converted to the tranquil self. This happens when it moves from the carnal self which prompts him towards evil (*nafs ammārah*) to the self which reprimands him (*nafs lawwāmah*) and then progresses until it becomes the tranquil self (*nafs mutma'innah*). When this happens, Allāh's favours and bounties are showered on him to the maximum. In other words, he completes the task for which he had come into this world.[1]

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that once you have realized whose shadow you are, you have completed your task. Now you can either die or continue to live.

Man's deterioration stems from his carnal self

Look at how clearly Khwājah Maʿsūm *rahimahullāh* explains that the deterioration of man stems from his carnal self. Man can only succeed when he recognizes his self through Allāh's inspiration. Do you see any discussions about the carnal self today? Did the people of the past succumb to the carnal self as is the case today? Now that you have learnt that those who became saints in the past did so by discarding the self, how can this divine principle change today? How did people come to this conclusion that they can

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[1] *Maktūbāt Maʿsūmīyyah*, vol. 3, p. 272.

become saints while giving vent to the demands of the self? When sainthood was not sought from the manner in which it ought to have been sought, people were deprived of it. So what is there to be so surprised about!?

Allāh does not regard the sincere and the insincere to be equal

I always tell people that they do not think about the actions and sincerity of the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum*. Yet, they certainly hope to receive the same blessings and favours as them. They ask, why don't we get those blessings and favours when we are also Muslims? Now you too must have understood that it is not enough to be merely a Muslim to obtain those things. Rather, it is essential to be a sincere Muslim. Sincerity will only be developed when no action or statement of man is adulterated by the carnal self.

It is essential to understand the carnal self and to protect one's self against its traps – for the murīd and for the shaykh as well. In fact, a shaykh cannot be a shaykh without first obliterating the carnal self. This is the actual reason for not deriving benefit, regarding which you complained. Since you wrote to me in this regard, I explained what I thought to be correct.[1] This is not the era for such discussions – there is no one to speak about this subject and no one is prepared to listen to it.

Affinity with Allāh is the basis for all excellences

Affinity with Allāh *taʿālā* is the basis for all excellences. However, the condition of people today is most astonishing because they do not turn their

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[1] Reference is made to a letter quoted at the beginning. (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān).

attention in the least towards acquiring it. They are immersed in searching for other things. One person asked me to teach him the wazīfah of *pās anfās*. Another person said to me that when he engages in dhikr and focuses on one *latifah*, the other one comes to a standstill. When he turns to the third one, the first one comes to a standstill.

Hadrat Hājī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* used to say that you should not worry about focussing on the *latā'if-e-sittah* because there is much difficulty in it. Just focus on the heart and the other *latā'if* will come automatically. He used to present the following Hadīth as proof:

ألا إن في الجسد مضغة إذا صلحت صلح الجسد كله، وإذا فسدت فسد الجسد كله، ألا وهي القلب.[1]

Listen! There is a piece of flesh in the body – if it is sound, the entire body will be sound. If it is unsound, the entire body will be unsound. Listen! It is the heart.

Note: Māshā Allāh! These are most useful and beneficial themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us who are associated with Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* to keep them in mind. Āmīn.

While reading these themes, the thought came to my mind that in their presence, it is useless for us to speak about them. We ought to read them repeatedly and rectify ourselves, and to continue refreshing our īmān. We must also relate them again and again to others so that they can also benefit from them. It is most unfortunate that even those who are associated

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[1] صحيح مسلم، كتاب المساقات، ٢٢، باب أخذ الحلال وترك الشبهات، ٣٠، حديث ١٥٩٩.

to H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh* neither pay attention to these themes nor value them, even though we all claim that we love him and have faith in him. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

THE ʻĀRIF AND AN EXAMPLE OF HIS SPIRITUAL CONDITION

The spiritual condition of the ʻārifīn

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* gives an example of an ʿārif in his *Mathnawī*:

> When people are asleep, they are disconnected from this world and unaware of their surroundings. An ʿārif experiences this condition while he is awake. He is disconnected from everything physical. His condition is like that of (Ashāb al-Kahf) - the youth in the cave:
>
> وَتَحْسَبُهُمْ اَيْقَاظًا وَّهُمْ رُقُوْدٌ
>
> *You assume that they are awake while they are asleep.*[1]

What this means is that the condition of an ʿārif is similar to what is described in the above verse. Do not reject this claim of ours because this is exactly what the condition of the ʿārifīn is, i.e. they are perpetually unmindful of the conditions and situations of this world. In other words, these personalities are not inclined towards and do not pay attention to the things which are obstacles from Allāh *taʿālā*, and the words and actions which cause a person to become negligent of Allāh *taʿālā* and distant from Him. They do not do anything which is against Allāh's pleasure because they are so obedient to Him like a pen in the hand of a writer – he causes it to write as he wants.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 18.

This does not mean that their power of choice has been taken away from them. Rather, they have obliterated their own choice and pleasures for Allāh's pleasure to the extent that although they do and say things by their own choice, the injunctions of the Sharīʿat have become so natural to them that it is as though they have no choice. This is why Maulānā Rūm *raẖimahullāh* compared their movements to that of a pen which is under the control of a writer. It is as though their submission is by their own will.

Maulānā Rūm *raẖimahullāh* then describes the condition of the laity. He says that the one who cannot see the fingers and thumb of the hand will consider the movement of the pen to be its own movement. In like manner, the laity did not submit themselves to the injunctions in matters which are within their choice. Instead, they followed the path of self opinions. Maulānā Rūm *raẖimahullāh* explains practical tauẖīd in these couplets. After a few more couplets, he writes:

It is as though the person who heard all this is saying: "Where are the people whom you have just described? Show them to us." He replies by saying that thousands of auliyā' who are similar to the As̱-ẖāb al-Kahf in the quality of being outwardly awake while they are unmindful of the world, are to be found in this world. There are those who – in these times – are like the companions of the cave, who interact and converse with you, but since a seal has been set on your eyes, you cannot see them.

He asks further on: Do you know the reason for these barriers on account of which you cannot recognize the auliyā'? He answers this question himself by saying that Allāh *taʿālā* set a seal on your hearts and eyes. Maulānā Rūm *raẖimahullāh* then describes the seal so

that people can make efforts to remove it. He does this in the midst of a story:

> The caliph said to Laylā: “Are you the one because of whom Majnūn is distressed and lost his mind? You are not more beautiful than other woman, so what is it that he saw in you?” She replied: “You are not Majnūn, so you rather keep quiet. If you had the eyes of Majnūn, you would have regarded both the worlds to be of no value. The difference between you and Majnūn is that you are still immersed in your self while Majnūn has passed it. This is why you cannot perceive any goodness and beauty. Majnūn’s eyes are not on anyone except me; and vigilance and intelligence are evil qualities in the path of love.”

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* identifies that seal and barrier for us – it is vigilance and attentiveness to this world which results in excessive thoughts about all except Allāh *taʿālā*. When a person is occupied by thoughts of everything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*, how will he think of Allāh *taʿālā*, how will he seek Allāh *taʿālā*, and how will he search for the means of finding Him, i.e. how will he search for the Ahlullāh?

The condition of this world and the seekers of this world

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* then goes into a lot of detail on the reprehensibility of attentiveness to this world and to worldly thoughts. When a person is engrossed in them, he cannot acquire selflessness. A person cannot come out of those veils and barriers on whose removal the recognition of the ʿārifīn is dependent. After speaking about the ills of this world,

Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* explains the foolishness of a materialistic person through an example. He says:

> The unproductive and fleeting existence of this world and the eternal existence of the Hereafter is like the existence of a shadow and the object which is casting the shadow. A person who discards the Hereafter and runs behind this world is like a bird flying in the sky, and a foolish person running behind its shadow which is falling on the ground in an attempt to hunt the shadow. No matter how much he runs behind the shadow, he will remain empty handed. He does not know that this is a reflection of the bird which is flying in the air, nor does he know where the source of that shadow is. He continues shooting arrows at the shadow until his quiver is empty. In the same way, the quiver of life of the seeker of this world becomes empty very quickly in his quest for the prey of this world.

After his discussion on worldly thoughts and the reprehensibility of hankering after this world, Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* describes the manner of saving one's self from it. He says that it is through the focus and training of a qualified shaykh, while the seeker remains obedient to the shaykh. He writes:

> If a (shadow of Allāh) perfect human becomes this person's mentor, he will get salvation from this world and worldly thoughts. This perfect human is dead to this world and fully conscious with regard to Allāh *taʿālā*. Hold on to such a person without any delay and without any doubts

> and misgivings so that you are saved from the tribulation of death, i.e. when efforts are made to snatch your īmān away at the time of your death. This happens mostly when love for this world has overwhelmed a person.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* then provides an identity of the spiritual masters of his time from whom the treasure of reaching Allāh *taʿālā* can be acquired. He says:

> Hold on to Shāh Shams ad-Dīn Tabrezī and obtain the sun from the shadow. If you cannot acquire those general blessings and enjoyment from him, then ask for Maulānā Diyā' al-Haq Hussām ad-Dīn who is his deputy.

Maulānā Diyā' al-Haq was first aligned to Shāh Shams ad-Dīn and then to Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh*. He is thus Maulānā Rūm's spiritual brother (*pīr bhāi*) and khalīfah. In his humility, Maulānā Rum *rahimahullāh* mentioned the name of Shāh Shams ad-Dīn, but reference is also made to the fact that if the person cannot derive benefit from him, he can revert to his deputy (i.e. to himself) because he too is his deputy like Shaykh Hussām ad-Dīn.

The evil of jealousy

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* states further:

> If you feel it below you to follow Shaykh Shams Tabrezī *rahimahullāh* or Maulānā Diyā' al-Haq *rahimahullāh* then understand well that this stems from jealousy. And if jealousy overwhelms you in Allāh's path then know that jealousy is

> the path of Shaytān who was an expert in this. It was due to his jealousy towards Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* that he felt it beneath him to prostrate to him. He harmed no one but himself because of this jealousy. There is no bigger obstacle than jealousy in the path of tasawwuf. It is because of jealousy that the defective ones were deprived of reaching perfection. To consider it below you to follow someone who has reached perfection, especially to desist from reverting to a khalīfah of your shaykh, is in most cases against the temperaments of people. They feel that since we are co-murīds, we are equals, so we cannot revert to them. On the other hand, perfection cannot be realized without following the one who is perfect. Fortunate indeed is the one in whom there is no jealousy.

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* is explaining one of the obstacles in this path, viz. jealousy. Hadrat Ādam *ʿalayhis salām* was Allāh's khalīfah. Shaytān was jealous of this. Subsequently, people in every era felt it beneath them to follow someone else. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* spoke to one of the Jewish scholars in privacy and asked him: "Take an oath in Allāh's name and tell me what you think of me?" He replied: "Everyone believes you to be a genuine person." Despite this, neither did he become a Muslim nor did he tell the other Jews what he thought of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* This was the attitude of the Jews of Madīnah. Now listen to what people from other places had to say. When a monk of Syria heard about Rasūlullāh's commission as a Prophet, he took a bath, changed his clothes,

emerged from his monastery and said to the people: "I am becoming a Muslim. This is the true Prophet." He then read the kalimah. The people disapproved of this and beat him up until he died.

Jealousy among co-murīds

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* says that jealousy is also found among co-murīds. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* says that most people are averse to reverting to a khalīfah of their shaykh. Such a person did not acquire perfection from his shaykh and is now also desisting from reverting to his shaykh's khalīfah. He is thus deprived from both. I am relating all these things to you but I do not think you people will pay heed. The Prophets *'alayhimus salām* used to speak so much about matters related to guidance but the unbelievers would not pay heed. The reason for this was that they claimed equality with the Prophets *'alayhimus salām* and felt that they were the same as them.

They used to say: "He is a human and we are also humans. What difference is there between him and us? He eats and sleeps, and we also eat and sleep." Jealousy was the reason for these statements. This is why they refused to submit and did not acquire blessings from such perfect human beings. I say, the seeker who has jealousy in him cannot succeed. He will realize his objective only if he gives up jealousy. It is certainly a difficult thing. Fortunate indeed is the one who has no jealousy. The defective ones failed to reach perfection because of it. A person spoke to Abū Jahal in privacy and said: "Look here, I am here and you are here. There is no third person. Tell me if he [Muhammad *sallallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*] is a Prophet or not." He replied: "He never spoke a lie." What he meant was that if he never spoke a lie in matters

related to the creation, how is it possible for him to ever speak a lie with regard to Allāh *taʿālā*!? He acknowledged this but still refused to embrace īmān.

One of my friends who was a khalīfah of Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* had pledged bayʿat to another saint before this. He related to us that his first shaykh said to him: "Go and study, and when you complete you must come to me." I said: "What if you are not alive until then?" He replied: "Allāh *taʿālā* will enable you to find someone." This friend of mine said to me that that saint used to say: "The reason why these Maulwīs do not reach spiritual heights is that they do not engage in dhikr and other spiritual devotions." I was a junior at the time and I still am, this is why I say that the carnal self is one's worst enemy.

The carnal self is the worst enemy

The worst enemy on the path to Allāh *taʿālā* is one's carnal self. People do not subdue it; so they cannot reach their destination. What can I say to you? I have seen some people who used to sit with absolute submission before Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* but they retrogressed so badly later on that I could not understand how they went against Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh*. After that I realized that they hadn't rectified their carnal self. I am stressing this point to you so that you realize that it is the carnal self which destroys us.

However, let alone subduing it, it is difficult for us to even recognize it. If you try to overpower your self, it will try to fight back. It has already defeated many people.

One Maulwī Sāhib used to say to me when we were in Thānah Bhawan: "How is it that those scholars who are very capable and distinguished do not come here –

i.e. on this path of Allāh *taʿālā*. Only those who are not so capable and learned come here." I said to him: "It is not their academic scholarship which is preventing them from coming here. Rather it is their incapability in this regard which his stopping them." I then pointed towards Hadrat Maulānā's room and asked: "Is that senior person who is sitting there not a distinguished scholar? Was Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* not an erudite scholar? Why are such distinguished scholars on this path?" He fell silent when I said this. I said: "If a person of little intelligence was to remain in your company, will he not understand and realize this much?" He was attacking us and he thought we did not understand what he was saying.

There was a saint who used to point towards his chest and say: "O people! Kill this; only then will you reach Allāh *taʿālā*." It is compulsory to kill the self, if not, it will not allow a person to go towards Allāh *taʿālā*. It is compulsory for a seeker to recognize the self and recognize its tricks and plots.

I am originally from a village and I used to speak to my fellow villagers about the carnal self. I used to find it quite difficult because it is not easy to explain. On one occasion, an example came to my mind so I related it to them. I am relating it to you as well.

There was a buffalo which ate a lot and became extremely fat. It used to move around freely and would sometimes come into the village as well. Whenever it entered the village, it used to cause a havoc. It would attack a cow or fling a goat aside, etc. It used to cause a lot of damage. One day the people managed to get hold of it and they cut off its horns. It stopped eating ever since that day. This caused it to lose weight and it became extremely weak. The people began loading

dung on it, and then used it to scatter the dung in their farms. This became its work. Anyone who needed it would catch hold of it and use it for whatever work he wanted to be done. On seeing it, we used to feel sorry for it because we would think about its past life and its present condition. I too observed both parts of its life. I then addressed the people and said: "We speak to you about Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* but no one asks us about why we went to the villagers, and now that we have come, we will have to suffer the consequences. In the same way, the Ahlullāh subdue their carnal selves. In other words, they engage in spiritual exercises and paralyse the self so that its strength and power is broken and it becomes obedient.

A saint by the name of H̲ad̲rat Maulānā ʿAlī Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib used to say: "The cooked food is available but there is no one to eat it." He also used to say: "We have had experiences with those villagers. They are like a buffalo which the villagers tied to an idol which was placed firmly in the ground. The buffalo was very strong. It jerked its head once and the idol was uprooted from its place. The buffalo began running and the idol which was tied to the rope was being dragged by the buffalo."

The saint continues: "The seeker [the buffalo] was strong while the quest [the idol] was weak. This is why it could uproot the idol. In the same way, these people will remove us from our places and we will not be able to convey them to Allāh *taʿālā*."

The carnal self is not easy to deal with. The more you recognize it the further away you will get from the Hell-fire and the closer you will go towards Paradise.

فَاَمَّا مَنْ طَغٰى وَآثَرَ الْحَيٰوةَ الدُّنْيَا فَاِنَّ الْجَحِيْمَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى، وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

As for he who transgressed, and preferred the live of this world, Hell alone is his abode. Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

Those who fail to realize their objective do so because of these evils. And these are the things which prevented people of the past from going to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām.* A poet says:

> The one who has a true sight is able to differentiate between good and evil, a friend of Allāh and His enemy, a Prophet and a non-Prophet. If a person cannot differentiate between them, you can conclude that he is blind.

This is why the main focus of the spiritual masters is to check if a murīd's carnal self has been subdued or not. Because if it is not subdued while they are present, how will it be subdued in their absence? It will be most difficult.

After many days we came to understand that education and training are of paramount importance, and that the discussion on the carnal self is most essential. Understanding this topic is difficult, and even more difficult to explain. It is, nonetheless, necessary so we have to speak about it. I related to you earlier on that people go to the saints but still remain deficient. The reason for it is their own

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 37-41.

defective beliefs. Maulānā Rūm *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* was a distinguished scholar. Listen to what he has to say:

> The Maulwī [referring to himself] did not become Maulānā Rūm until he came into the service of <u>H</u>a<u>d</u>rat Shams Tabrezī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh*.

He is actually advising the scholars and ʿulamā' that if they want to become scholars in the true sense of the word, and pass on their knowledge in the correct places, they will have to hold on to a shaykh-e-kāmil. Without this, their knowledge will remain incomplete and they will be scholars and nothing else. They will not be an ʿārif. Shaykh Saʿdī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* says that a seeker without maʿrifat (i.e. he does not recognize his own self, his shaykh and the path) is like a bird without wings. In other words, it is in constant danger until an animal eventually kills it. In the same way, if a seeker is devoid of maʿrifat, Shay<u>t</u>ān is lying in wait for him and it will not be surprising when he attacks him at some point along the way.

The valley of the carnal self is the most difficult

There was a person in whom many people had faith and confidence, but one man did not. When this man found an opportunity, he went into his room without the other knowing. When he woke up at night for tahajjud he went towards him. The person asked: "Who is it?" He replied: "I am the brother of Jibra'īl." He asked: "Why have you come here?" The man said: "Allāh *taʿālā* is very pleased with your worship so He sent me to tell you that there is no need for you to engage in so much of worship. He has absolved you of all worship." Just before this man could enter, the person had placed his hand on the water jug to perform wu<u>d</u>ū'. But when he heard this, he removed

his hand and went back to sleep. (It did not even cross his mind to perform two rakʿats of s̲alāh to show his appreciation. Due to his ignorance, his carnal self caused him to gloat over his worship and he thought to himself that he is certainly a very ardent worshipper). The next morning he did not even go for the fajr s̲alāh. The people knocked on his door but he did not respond. They feared that he has probably passed away. They unlocked the door and went in. They saw him sitting and asked: "What is the matter? Why did you not come for the fajr s̲alāh today?" He replied: "The brother of Jibra'īl came to me in the night and said these things to me." One of those who were present began to laugh. The people realized that he must have done this.

This is why I say that the most difficult valley is that of the carnal self. And so, it is essential to recognize it. It is the same carnal self which deceived Shayt̲ān. It is easy to grasp the plotting of Shayt̲ān, but most difficult to understand the plotting and deception of the carnal self.

Recognition of the self

There was a saint who used to live alone and engage in Allāh's worship. One day the thought crossed his mind that he ought to go out for jihād. Subsequently, this thought troubled him to the point of making him restless. He finally made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* and asked Him the reason for this urge. He received the following reply: "You are engaged in spiritual striving which is a 24-hour activity. Your self has become fed up because of it. It wants you to fight the unbelievers so that it is put to an end within a few minutes and is saved from this continuous spiritual striving of yours." He said: "If that is the case I will not go for jihād. I will

continue worshipping Allāh *taʿālā* in this way and continue making Him happy."

Note: Jihād becomes wājib in certain situations. A person ought to consult a muftī when situations demand it. (compiler)

Piety and good character – the means to Paradise

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* asked Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* about the thing which will be most effective in admitting people into Paradise. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said that it is good character and piety.[1] By virtue of good character a person's interactions with people will be good. In other words, he will fulfil the rights of fellow humans to the full. And piety will enable him to fulfil the rights of Allāh *taʿālā*.

A Hadīth states that the rank of good character surpasses that of salāh and fasting.[2] In other words, one person has good character but does not engage in a lot of optional acts of worship, while another engages in excessive worship but is not of sound character. The first is better than the latter person. Those who engage in excessive acts of worship generally experience a deterioration in their character. Firstly because they gloat over their worship and scorn others because of it. Secondly, because they remain awake for lengthy periods of time, they become temperamental. I had quoted the following couplet to you yesterday. Listen to it again:

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[1] سنن الترمذي، كتاب البر، باب حسن الخلق، ٦٢، حديث ٢٠٠٤.

[2] أيضا، حديث ٢٠٠٣.

> The ascetic could not cross the path safely because of his pride and arrogance. On the other hand, the sinner reached Paradise safely by virtue of his submission and humility.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* writes in his *Būstān* that as a rule, the advice of intelligent people is generally remembered. So listen to my advice as well:

> The sinner who is fearful of Allāh's questioning is better than the worshipper who is engaged in ostentatious worship.

In other words, instead of being a worshipper of Allāh *taʿālā* he worships his own worship.

Note: May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with sound character together with sound worship. Āmīn. (compiler)

IT IS OBLIGATORY TO SUBJUGATE THE SELF

Baydāwī Sharīf is a well-known book of tafsīr. The author, ʿAllāmah Qādī Baydāwī *rahimahullāh*, is from among the senior scholars. He repeatedly states in his tafsīr that a Hadīth states that if a person practises on the things which he knows, Allāh *taʿālā* confers him with knowledge of the things which are unknown to him. The words of this Hadīth are:

مَنْ عَمِلَ بِمَا عَلِمَ، أَوْرَثَهُ اللهُ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ

We learn from this that if a person continues practising on his knowledge, it will continue increasing. If he gives up practising, his knowledge will decrease and there will be no blessings in it.

Note: This shows the immense need and importance of knowledge. May Allāh *taʿālā* enable us to practise to the utmost. Āmīn. (compiler)

There was a saint who used to frequent a certain place. A large number of people used to assemble for his programmes. The town did not have a venue which could accommodate everyone. This is why he used to deliver his lecture in a park. However, when he was put through a test, all the people became opposed to him. I thought to myself: O Allāh! Neither can their confidence be relied upon nor is there any basis for their scepticism.

I spoke about this on one occasion and a person was greatly impressed by it. He said: "You are absolutely correct. Our faith is like water in an earthen jar which gets filled quickly and gets empty quickly. The other is a goblet which takes long to fill and long to get empty." There is no doubt that while faith is most essential, it

is also very difficult. It is easy to acknowledge a person's excellence verbally, but difficult to have the same level of faith in the heart.

It was not easy to understand what Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say. He was a distinguished scholar and also possessed an impeccable intelligence. He conveyed knowledge and understanding to an entire world. On the other hand, you cannot even drive your own vehicle properly. Now I ask you, how is it for such people to compete with an ʿālim? People now say that each and everything which Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* said is being realized. Do you know what is the easiest thing? The easiest thing is to make objections against an ʿālim and a shaykh. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā.*

Nowadays people consider physical closeness to the mashā'ikh to be the means to spiritual closeness. They remain in their company but do not rectify their carnal self whose rectification is obligatory. Frequenting the saints must be with the objective of reformation. If a person wants to rectify his self, he must have full confidence and faith in the one whom he is going to. He must have full respect for him in his heart. This is essential. If there is no faith at all and the saint is not recognized as he ought to, how will a person rectify himself through him?

A supernatural feat of a saint

A saint was travelling by ship. A wealthy person was also travelling on the same ship. These wealthy people like to do something to pass their time. He asked his companions to make arrangements to pass the time. They got hold of the saint whose head was cleanly shaven, and presented him to the rich man. The saint

was certainly a saint and a man of close affiliation with Allāh *taʿālā*. Those who were seated there would tap his [bald] head which caused a certain type of sound. They would all laugh at the sound. When they carried on in this manner for quite some time, the saint received inspiration [from Allāh *taʿālā*] saying: "These people have been most disrespectful towards you for too long now. I disapprove of it. If you wish, I will cause this ship to sink." The saint said: "O Allāh! You have the power to drown them all and You also have the power to enable them to recognize who I am, and to create in their hearts the eyes with which they can recognize me." Allāh *taʿālā* immediately caused all of them to have the true eyes to recognize the saint and they all sat respectfully before him.

It sometimes happens that a person does not recognize a true friend of Allāh *taʿālā* even though he may be right next to him. He could have acquired spiritual blessings from him but is deprived of that because of his inability to recognize him. Sometimes a person does not recognize even his own self.

I was having a discussion with an ʿālim from Allāhābād. He wanted to establish a spiritual bond with me although he was already connected to the saints. In the course of our discussion I said to him: "You already have a bond with the saints, what is the need to establish one with me?" He gave a beautiful reply. He said: "I have certainly frequented the saints and maintained a bond with them. However, after presenting myself in your company I realized that I haven't recognized my own self up to now nor have I recognized Dīn. I had interactions and attachments with people of Dīn but I was not focussed towards Dīn. Furthermore, I did not recognize my carnal self on account of which people will be cast into the Hell-

fire. I want to establish a bond with you so that my self will be rectified."

I said: "You are correct in whatever you said. I continually speak about the carnal self and expound its evils. You yourself said that you did not recognize your carnal self up to now, and that you recognized it after remaining in my company."

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاَمَّا مَنْ خَافَ مَقَامَ رَبِّهٖ وَنَهَى النَّفْسَ عَنِ الْهَوٰى فَاِنَّ الْجَنَّةَ هِيَ الْمَاْوٰى.

Whoever feared standing before his Lord and stopped his soul from desires, then Paradise alone is his abode.[1]

A Sufi S̲āh̲ib was sitting alone and reading this couplet:

> I have already sacrificed my heart for Muh̲ammad *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. And I have fulfilled my obligations to Allāh *taʿālā*.

I was still studying in the madrasah and happened to go to the masjid in which the Sufi S̲āh̲ib was sitting and reading the above couplet. I thought to myself: "He is a really successful man because he has fulfilled his obligations to Allāh *taʿālā*." I gauged from the manner in which he was reading the couplet that he is saying the truth, and he is saying it from his heart. It had such an effect on me that I addressed my own self saying: "You are studying in a madrasah yet you do not enjoy a spiritual condition like his!? Look at how pure his conditions are."

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[1] Sūrah an-Nāziʿāt, 79: 40-41.

Without doubt, the love of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* which the Sufi S̲āh̲ib referred to as "sacrificing of the heart" is a most important obligation and very difficult to acquire because once you place your foot in the path of Rasūlullāh's love, you will have to give up the demands of your carnal self and abandon your desires. This is no mean feat. If it is not easy to recognize the self, how can it be easy to give it up?!

A person had a spiritual bond with some other shaykh and he used to frequent me as well. I asked him: "You have a bond with such and such shaykh, and now you are coming to me. Tell me what have you understood?" He replied: "I certainly had spiritual bonds with other saints, but I only understood true Dīn after coming here."

The previous person said that he learnt to recognize the self by coming here, and this person said that he understood Dīn after coming here. I now ask you that if a person goes to the saints and does not understand Dīn nor does he recognize his self, then can his going to them be considered? In the same way I say to you that if a person enters the T̲arīqah and still does not recognize his self, then can such a T̲arīqah be considered to be valid in which the self cannot be recognized? The following couplet applies to such a situation:

> He went to the Kaʿbah but the love for idols did not leave his heart. He drank zam zam but the fire in his heart was not extinguished.

The one who composed this couplet is most correct. This is the condition of many of those who go for h̲ajj. The same has become of the people of the T̲arīqah of

today: "They seek Allāh *taʿālā* but unfortunately they have succumbed to their carnal self."

A lecturer went to a certain place. A man said to his friend: "Come, let's go listen to his lecture." His friend asked: "First tell me, he may be an ʿālim and a great scholar, but is he also a human being? I am searching for the perfect human being."

He must have been observing knowledge and practice in the educated ones but could not find noble character and manners in them. He was probably searching for noble character and saintly qualities in the ʿulamā', and this is what he expressed as "a human being". The same person then went to Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* and found what he was searching for.

I went to my village on one occasion and asked the people by pointing with my fingers: "Is one better or two?" An intelligent man was present there and understood what I was meaning and said: "I have fully understood that a man needs Dīn together with this world." I asked: "Is it obligatory to acquire Dīn together with the world? If salāh is obligatory, wudū' is obligatory with it. If you want to perform salāh you will have to perform wudū' as well. If the soul is purified through salāh, the external body parts are purified through wudū'."

There was a saint who had so much of belief in the left over water of wudū' that whenever he fell ill, he would drink that left over water and he would recover from his illness. To perform wudū' is an order of the Sharīʿat. It is an order from Allāh *taʿālā*. What then can be said of its blessings! And when wudū' is followed by salāh, then glory to Allāh – it is a miʿrāj of a believer.

I am explaining these fundamentals to you and want to show you how you lost the way. The Qur’ān is read to you, the Hadīth is quoted before you, yet I do not see any effect on you. The fact of the matter is that genuine knowledge of Dīn which could affect the heart and propel you towards action is not being presented to you. This is why people do not even develop a taste for Dīn. A lot of time and effort are needed to teach Dīn. You will not be able to learn much by just one or two days of superficial lectures.

I used to go to a certain place and the people there would want me to stay over until Friday so that I could deliver a talk to them. But I would not stay until then and leave before Friday. One day, the people imposed on me and did not give me an opportunity to leave until it was the time of jumuʿah. After the salāh, they made an announcement that I will be addressing them. They did this without asking me. All the people were now waiting for me. I thought to myself: What should I do now? If I do not speak, they will feel offended and they will say that these Maulwīs are too proud. At the same time, I did not feel like delivering a talk because the announcement was made without following the correct procedure – they did not ask me. Anyway, I gave a talk and said:

Listen! Hadrat ʿĀ’ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* says that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not speak continuously as you people do.[1] This is known as *sard* in Arabic. In other words, he did not speak non-stop. Instead, he would pause in-between. I said to the people: “Look, this is what the Hadīth says but you

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[1] سنن الترمذي، كتاب المناقب، باب قول عائشة رضي الله عنها ما كان يتكلم بكلام يبينه فصل حديث ٣٦٣٩.

people most probably expect to listen to a *sard* talk. I am therefore removing this expectation of yours from the beginning. It is you – the public – who have spoilt the Maulwīs. You are the ones who pass or fail them. When the Maulwīs saw that this is how they can become popular among the masses, they chose this method of speaking." I then explained this a bit and noticed that no one got up to leave. They were all sitting and listening silently. Some 'ulamā' were also present. Everyone approved of what I was saying and even the masses were quite impressed. Subsequently, the lectures of other speakers did not appeal to them and they would not invite anyone else from outside.

Delivering a lecture is also an act of worship

Just as s̱alāh is an act of worship and there has to be a good intention for it, delivering a lecture is part of Dīn and an act of worship. The intention for it must also be good – the speaker's intention and the intention of the audience. If you have no faith and confidence in an 'ālim or shaykh, you will not benefit from him. A Maulwī S̱āẖib was delivering a talk at some place. As he was coming to an end, one fellow said to his friend: "The Maulwī S̱āẖib's fuel is finished now."

Did you see! If this is the type of respect for the 'ulamā', how will a person benefit from his talk? People requested me to give a talk on one occasion. I refused initially but when they persisted, I agreed. After the talk, a man came up to me and said something from his heart. He said: "I did not think you will deliver such a good talk." Did you see! I was requested to give a talk so that they could test me. It was not to learn Dīn and to hear the words of Allāh *ta'ālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu 'alayhi wa sallam*. It was to see how I speak. When he said this, I said: "I

see, my examinations haven't come to an end as yet. I wrote examinations when I was in madrasah. I then gave an examination before Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh*. My self is still being tested all the time. And now you have come to test me." I added: "Dear brothers! What is all this which you are doing? Choose a religious life. The least you can do is start performing your salāh regularly because it is an obligation from Allāh *ta'ālā*, it is the mi'rāj of a believer, and it is the first thing you will be questioned about on the day of Resurrection.

A poet rightly says:

> The day of Resurrection will be an extremely difficult day. Salāh will be the first thing to be questioned about.

The man was most impressed by this explanation as well and said: "You are certainly correct. You put an end to all my arguments."

I am saying all this while on the subject that if something is said solely for Allāh's sake, it will certainly have an effect. If you speak to the people for Allāh's sake, and they listen for Allāh's sake, it will certainly have an effect. If you listen with the intention of taking an effect, it will have an effect on you. You should at least make this intention. If your intention is to please the audience alone, then obviously the blessing will be according to your intention. Why, then, are you looking for an effect in your talk?

BAD CHARACTER IS THE CAUSE OF ALL EVIL

If a person has undertaken a deep study of the character of the pious predecessors – in fact, of the Prophets *ʿalayhis salām* as well – and after observing the conditions of people and compared them to the character of the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, it will become clear to him that the entire destruction of Dīn and one's worldly life is on account of people's bad character. The one who has not experienced this or does not have knowledge of it is not addressed in this discussion of mine.

Some Muslims consider themselves to be totally free and independent as regards their dealings and interactions. They have virtually removed these from Dīn. As for character, everyone has expelled it from Dīn. They all consider the character which they learnt from their forefathers to be the original one.

The worshippers are not progressing because although they are worshipping, they are paying no attention whatsoever to character and ethics. The ʿulamāʾ complain that the worshippers have no manners. The worshippers have the same complaint about the ʿulamāʾ. In the same way, the ʿulamāʾ have this complaint about the laity, and the laity have the same complaint about the ʿulamāʾ – that there is no good character in them.

I believe that the worldly retrogression of Muslims is caused by the same bad character. In other words, it is because of their base and mean character that they do not have the ability to do even a minor worldly task properly. As for major worldly tasks, do not even ask about them. They do not even have the ability to take care of their houses. Their bad character has resulted

in the complete destruction of their homes. We see this openly by day and night. Even if a well wisher was to shed tears of blood, it will not suffice. The unfortunate thing about this is that people do not even perceive it. If the matter is brought to their attention, it still does not awaken their consciousness. The community is dead and its feelings and emotions are dead. In fact, they are wiped out and obliterated.

إنما الأمم بالأخلاق ما بقيت – فإن هم، ذهبت أخلاقهم ذهبوا

Nations will exist for as long as good character exists in them. When their good character ceases to exist, they too will cease to exist (as a nation).

There is a battle between the juniors and seniors in their houses. Father and son are at war. Their houses have become examples of Hell. There is no peace and comfort in them; there is only war and disputes. There is intense malice in their hearts. The following couplets of Shaykh Shīrāzī are most appropriate to this discussion:

> What is all this noise and clamour which I am observing? I am seeing the entire world filled with corruption and evil. Daughters are fighting with their mothers, and I see sons wishing for evil for their fathers. There remains no mercy and love between brothers. In the same way, the father no longer has any affection towards his son. Every person wants the next day to be better than the previous one, but the problem is that I am seeing every coming day to be worse than the previous one.

I feel that their can be no better description of an evil situation than the one portrayed by Shaykh Shīrāzī

rahimahullāh. The wise sages of the Muslim nation have always been expressing their sorrow when they observed situations of this nature. This is an explanation of the effect of bad character on their worldly lives. Consequently, they cannot earn a livelihood. Even if they do, they cannot sit and consume it peacefully. The rich and the poor are distressed. The masses are worried and so are the elite. The world has reverted to the bad character which existed before the commissioning of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* as a Messenger of Allāh *taʿālā*. The days of ignorance have come back. The villages are wasted, the towns are desolate, and region after region is destroyed. A poet rightly said:

> O that blessed soul – *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* – which is resting in the blessed land of Madīnah Munawwarah. Please wake up because the East and the West – the whole world – has been destroyed. Fill it and illuminate it with your effulgence and blessings.

We have no principles in our lives. We are most free and liberal in whatever we do. We are free from Dīn, free from worldly matters, free from our intellects, free from prudence, free from our fathers, free from our mothers – we are free from every thing that is correct and right. But we are not free from our slavery to our carnal selves. I do not know where this freedom will convey us to and what evil day it will show to us!

> Major changes and revolutions took place over the course of time. The skies changed and the earth changed, but friends and relatives have not changed.

Note: This is a most beneficial and effective theme. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn. (compiler)

THE NEED TO CORRECT ONE'S INTENTION AND RECTIFY THE SELF

A person may go to a certain place with the wrong objective. This is why when going to a saint, one must go with the correct objective. He must clearly express the objective for which he came. We are not here to increase the number of people. If the objective is going to be wrong, of what benefit will a large gathering be?

Differences are so common nowadays that you even see differences between the shaykh and murīd. The murīd considers his view to be correct and the view of his shaykh to be wrong. Even if the murīd is convinced through proofs, he is not prepared to accept.

A man used to be in the service of H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*. He used to stand at the entrance and if any person intended to go in, he would say to him: "What do you want here? Go to such and such shaykh, go to such and such shaykh." Some people asked him: "Why do you do this? You ought to be encouraging people to come to a place like this so that they can derive benefit." He replied: "Those who come here are in one of two conditions. If a person is intelligent, he will not leave such a place even after I asked him to leave. If a person is stupid, it will be better for him to leave because what is the benefit of having an assembly of foolish and stupid people? H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī S̲āh̲ib will be disturbed by such people."

If a person is able to rectify his relationship with the creation and with Allāh *taʿālā* in today's times, then I will consider it to be a karāmat of that person because

these are most corrupt times; it is not easy to join two hearts.

The basis of rectification is that if a person's word or action is insincere, he must be apprised of it. The reason why people are not benefiting from the places of rectification is that they are filled with insincere people. They have harmed their own paths and are now causing harm to others.

Just as it is an obligatory duty of a shaykh to correct a person's relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*, it is his duty to correct the murīd's mutual relationships with people. Nowadays people think that a shaykh is there only to teach them waẕīfahs. If an expert and affectionate shaykh tries to resolve the mutual disputes of people and to set right their relationships, they think that this is beyond the duty of the shaykh. In fact, they think he is doing something which is opposed to his position. To Allāh we belong and to Him is our return.

As long as a shaykh teaches them waẕīfahs and how to connect with Allāh *taʿālā*, the people are happy. But if he turns their attention to setting right their dealings and relationships, they disregard and scorn him. They become angry at him. I say, you can become angry if you want but I cannot see you getting destroyed and not showing you the path to success. Those who work for Allāh's pleasure do not bother about large crowds of followers. Instead, we focus on teaching you to maintain good and transparent relationships. A poet says:

> It is kufr to harbour mutual malice on the path of the Ṯarīqah. It is our principal to maintain the heart pure and clear like a mirror.

The mark of a true Muslim is that he makes the following du'ā' as mentioned in the Qur'ān:

وَلَا تَجْعَلْ فِيْ قُلُوْبِنَا غِلًّا لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا

O Allāh! Let there not be malice in our hearts towards the believers.[1]

A really excellent quality of a believer is that he has no ill-feeling towards his fellow Muslim.

A snake-catcher came into the town on one occasion. There was a snake which was inhabiting the house of a Hāfiz Sāhib. The snake-catcher went to his house and I joined him so that I could observe how he catches it and removes it from the house. The man stood at the entrance, uttered a few words, and the snake emerged angrily. He then carried it with a stick and placed it in a sack. Just as this snake-catcher removed the snake from the house, the saints remove a far more poisonous snake, i.e. the snake which is harboured in the carnal self. The carnal self is a very powerful and poisonous snake. A poet says:

> The carnal self is a poisonous snake. Do not think it is dead; it is just lying in hibernation because it cannot exercise its influence.

It is very difficult to gain control of the self. It is easy to engage in dhikr, spiritual meditation, etc. but most difficult to subdue the carnal self.

Whatever fights, disputes and corruption we see today are due to the carnal self. The greatest service a person can render today is to pay attention to

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[1] Sūrah al-Hashr, 59: 10.

removing and subduing the carnal self. Whichever person has a following must direct the attention of his followers to the rectification of the self. It is a very volatile issue; so no talk or lecture should be devoid of this subject. This is the real work for our times, and Allāh's pleasure lies in it. This is the demand of īmān. The reason why people are not being rectified today is that many people do not regard evil as evil. Those who consider it to be evil do not express it. Consequently, its evilness is gradually leaving the hearts of people. On the other hand, if these evils were vehemently disapproved, those who commit them will also develop an abhorrence for them and give them up.

Listen! I am speaking about a most essential matter. Listen to it, understand it and practise on it. This is not the time to suffice with listening. This is the time for action. You have been hearing for too long now.

Note: Māshā Allāh! Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* discussed most beneficial themes which ought to be practised. (compiler)

LEAVE THE CARNAL SELF AND YOU WILL FIND ALLĀH

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* people are beginning to understand matters related to the self. Our ʿulamā' and mashā'ikh have been continually discussing this topic. Imām Ghazzālī *rahimahullāh* considers it to be fard-e-ʿayn. He wanted people to recognize the self because this is the way to rectify it and from here a person can progress. If a task is not done in the manner prescribed for it, how can it ever be completed? People are doing everything else but they have disregarded the self. I have examined my own self and observed the selves of people. This is why I say that the selves of the ʿulamā' are just like those of the masses. The only difference is that we have a tongue in our mouths through which we cast a veil over it while the masses cannot do this. This is how I subdue the self: I say to it that there are many evils which are not in the masses. The masses are therefore better than us as regards the self. I embarrass the self in this way and silence it.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just look at the concern which Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh* had for the rectification of his self. He also showed us the way to rectify it. We are very far away from this. How, then, can our rectification succeed? (compiler)

I said to one person: "Just look at that man who is your friend and see how he is talking. Is it that he does not understand the self at all or is it something else with him?" He replied: "No, he understands it very well but his self does not allow him to proceed." Look! A man has the knowledge and his friend say that he understands. But it does not necessarily mean that if a person has knowledge he will practise on it as well.

In the beginning I said that people are beginning to understand matters related to the self. The reason why I said it is that I received a letter in which a person wrote: "Thinking about the Hell-fire and picturing Allāh's displeasure have shaken my heart, but I am not able to do good actions. I have become extremely lazy. My practices are restricted to the five salāhs with congregation, a little bit of Qur'ān recitation and duʿā'. However, even when doing these few things I have to do battle with my self. I am constantly in fear because I do not know when this enemy at my side [my self] will overpower me. Now I do not even feel like laughing. I feel I am walking on a wall and I am about to fall."

This person is not a Maulwī Sāhib but he wrote quite well. I gauged that he is beginning to understand some of the points about the self. After all, once a person has the worry to rectify his self, then what more does he need? He will experience success after success. The same person wrote: "Show me a way through which it becomes easy for me to combat my self." I wrote that he must repeat the following duʿā' excessively:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْئَلُكَ الْيُسْرَ وَالْمُعَافَاةَ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْآخِرَةِ

O Allāh! I beg You for ease and pardon in this world and in the Hereafter.

What I meant was that a person ought to beg from Allāh *taʿālā* alone for ease and pardon. As long as Allāh *taʿālā* does not provide ease, a person will not be able to progress. If you want a task to be accomplished just by listening to a lecture then this will not happen. Many lecturers and speakers came and went, yet we did not take anything from them. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say that there was a saint who used to speak a lot. He received inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* to remain silent. He stopped talking. Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* said: "I wrote a book on this subject, and on that subject, and so on. However, when I wrote on the virtues of Allāh's remembrance I realized that my previous books were not beneficial."

What do you think? Do you think that after that saint stopped talking he fell from grace in the sight of the people? Certainly not. In fact, I believe that his murīds must have started benefiting even more from him. They were not benefiting so much when he was talking. Man must first cast aside his self. Some people recognized the self after 30 years. They used to spend eons in the company of the saints; only then were they able to recognize the self. Whoever goes into the Hell-fire will go on account of the evils of the self.

Shaykh Saʿdī *rah̲imahullāh* says that people think that after a person is lowered in his grave, he becomes soil. We have become soil even before we died. The truth of the matter is that a person must obliterate himself long before he dies. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said on one occasion: Look at Abū Bakr! He is walking on earth but he is a Jannatī (a person of Paradise). In other words, he has freed himself from all the evils on account of which a person is deprived of Paradise. It is obligatory on us to establish a bond of love with Allāh *taʿālā* while we are in this world. We could rephrase the statement of Imām Ghazzālī *rah̲imahullāh* [quoted previously] and say: It is obligatory to have knowledge of the tricks of the self and to get rid off it. In other words, there are two obligations at one and the same time. One is to have

love for Allāh *taʿālā* and the other is to remove one's evils.

The issue concerning the self is not easy. Nevertheless, what we have to do from our side is that we must make efforts to rectify it even though it will not die if we try to kill it. It can only die if Allāh *taʿālā* showers His grace on us. Subsequently, it becomes like a bullet which disappears. It can no longer influence a person. Instead, it becomes a nafs-e-muṯma'innah – an obedient and compliant self.

Many of those who used to come to H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* were people who could not give up their evil habits and actions. H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* used to rectify them. Many people would also be banished and expelled from there. When I was at the khānqāh at Thānah Bhawan, I used to get up in the latter part of the night and perform wud̲ū' in the pond. I used to observe a man waking up and sitting up. One of my responsibilities was to copy the letters for H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh*. In this way, I used to learn about the condition of the people there. I therefore knew this man's conditions. He was a very old man but he was caught up in a certain sin which I cannot even speak about because I feared it immensely. I feared it coming to me. I am saying this to you to show you that when the self becomes accustomed to bad habits, it is very difficult to remove them. It is extremely difficult to rectify the self in such a situation.

This is why I am discussing the self with you. It is very easy to read waẕīfahs but most difficult to take control of the evils of the self. I consider taking control of the self to be the fundamental of sainthood. The saints spoke about the self, this is why I am speaking about it. If we do not speak about it, knowledge about it will

disappear. How will a person be able to practise if there is no knowledge?

Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* was put through a tribulation but Allāh *taʿālā* freed him. An infant bore testimony in his favour and Zulaykhā herself said:

اَلْئٰنَ حَصْحَصَ الْحَقُّ، اَنَا رَاوَدْتُّهُ عَنْ نَّفْسِهِ

The truth has now been exposed: It was I who had tried to seduce him.[1]

Despite all this, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* said:

وَمَآ اُبَرِّئُ نَفْسِيْ، اِنَّ النَّفْسَ لَاَمَّارَةٌۢ بِالسُّوْءِ اِلَّا مَا رَحِمَ رَبِّيْ

I do not absolve my self; surely the self teaches evil except those upon whom my Lord has mercy.[2]

The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* are among those on whom Allāh's mercy descends. Look at this statement of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* which Allāh *taʿālā* quoted. We learn from this that there is a nafs-e-ammārah as well. The Sufis undertake its rectification. Sometimes it takes a person a very long period of time to gain control over it.

Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that when a man becomes old and his hairs turn white, his heart ought to become white as well. What he meant was that if he was heedless during his young days, then although it is bad, a cause for heedlessness is found in him [he is young]. But once he becomes old and he still does not think of death, and is heedless of his presentation before Allāh *taʿālā*,

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 51.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 53.

then this is a most evil situation. If the heart is black while the hairs are black, we can say that the internal and external selves are the same. But when the hairs turn white and the heart still remains black, then there is a contradiction between the internal and external selves. If the external is praiseworthy and the internal self is blameworthy, then it is similar to hypocrisy.

I just told you that people will go into the Hell-fire because of their carnal self. Now listen to a Hadīth in this regard:

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* quotes from Muhammad ibn Wāsiʿ who said: Some of the people of Paradise will look at the inmates of Hell and they will converse with each other. The people of Paradise will ask them: "What happened to you? You had ordered us to do certain things which we did and on account of which we were admitted into Paradise. Yet we are seeing you in Hell?!" They will reply: "You are right. We certainly asked you to do certain things but we did not do them ourselves."

Another Hadīth states that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* saw certain people in the Hell-fire whose tongues were being cut off with scissors. When he asked about the identity of these people he was told: "They are the orators from your ummat whose tongues used to move like scissors in the world." In other words, they were very swift with their tongues but very lazy as regards actions.

A person asked me: "Show me a book from which I could learn about the self." I said: "I can certainly show you because there are books on this subject. However, let me tell you one more thing – save your tongue from backbiting. If you do this, you will be able to do many actions. On the other hand, books only

contain knowledge and sciences; you will not necessarily practise what you read. What, then, will you do with only knowledge? First practise on the things you know and then search for other knowledge. Save your tongue from backbiting. Save your stomach from harām food. If you do these two things, you will see how much of light develops in your heart.” The man said: “I have learnt something extremely beneficial.”

The prohibition of backbiting is mentioned in the Qur’ān:

يٰاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوا اجْتَنِبُوْا كَثِيْرًا مِّنَ الظَّنِّ اِنَّ بَعْضَ الظَّنِّ اِثْمٌ وَّلَا تَجَسَّسُوْا وَلَا يَغْتَبْ بَّعْضُكُمْ بَعْضًا، اَيُحِبُّ اَحَدُكُمْ اَنْ يَّأْكُلَ لَحْمَ اَخِيْهِ مَيْتًا فَكَرِهْتُمُوْهُ.

O believers! Abstain from much suspicion. Surely some suspicions amount to sin. Neither spy on one another nor backbite one another. Would any one of you like to eat the flesh of his brother who is dead? You abhor it.[1]

Allāh *ta‘ālā* prohibits three things in the above verse: (1) suspicion, (2) spying, (3) backbiting. The ‘ulamā’ state that this is the sequence which is normally followed. A person first has bad thoughts and suspicions about another. He is not satisfied and fully convinced with the suspicions so he starts to spy on him. After obtaining some knowledge about him, he speaks ill of him to others. This is known as backbiting

It is stated in the Ahādīth that a backbiter will be told on the day of Resurrection to eat the flesh of his

[1] Sūrah al-Hujurāt, 49: 12.

brother. He will make a funny face, so it will be said to him: "But you used to eat his flesh in the world." Reference is made to his backbiting. All the person's sins will be brought before him on the day of Resurrection and he will realize that it was his carnal self which caused him to witness this bad day.

The friendship of a righteous friend

The one whom you consider to be your friend in this world will be your enemy in the Hereafter except the one who is righteous. In other words, only the friendship of a person who is righteous and is freed from the dictates of his self is a worthy friendship. He is a sincere friend in this world and will prove his sincerity in the Hereafter as well.

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اَلْاَخِلَّاءُ يَوْمَئِذٍ بَعْضُهُمْ لِبَعْضٍ عَدُوٌّ اِلَّا الْمُتَّقِيْنَ

On that day, friends will be enemies of each other except those who fear.[1]

A Hadīth states:

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَعِنِّيْ عَلٰى دِيْنِيْ بِالدُّنْيَا وَعَلٰى آخِرَتِيْ بِالتَّقْوٰى

O Allāh! Help me in my Dīnī matters through worldly means, and in the affairs of the Hereafter through piety.

وَاحْفَظْنِيْ فِيْمَا غِبْتُ عَنْهُ، وَلَا تَكِلْنِيْ اِلٰى نَفْسِيْ فِيْمَا حَضَرْتُهُ

[1] Sūrah az-Zukhruf, 43: 67.

Safeguard me from the things which are hidden from me, and do not cause me to rely on my self in matters which are before me.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked Allāh *taʿālā* for piety and to be saved from his self. The greatest enemy of man is his carnal self and it can be removed through piety. It encourages man to get occupied in unnecessary things. One of my friends used to read this couplet:

> O self! Give up all actions which are unnecessary, and do what will be necessary for you on the day of Resurrection.

The reason for the importance of taqwā

Taqwā is important because there can be no ostentation in it, while there can be ostentation in outward actions. If a person gives up suspicion, spying and backbiting; does anyone know that he is giving these things up? Similarly, when a person rectifies his character and moves towards piety, others cannot understand it. It is said with regard to H̲ad̲rat Imām Abū H̲anīfah *rah̲imahullāh* that he abstained from backbiting anyone although others used to backbite about him. He used to say: "If I have to backbite anyone, I rather backbite about my mother so that she can receive the rewards. I am not so foolish as to bear the difficulties of doing good deeds and to waste them away through backbiting." Tahajjud s̲alāh is not compulsory but it is compulsory to abstain from backbiting. When I was in my village, I noticed the people remaining awake the entire night of Laylatul Qadr, but fighting against each other the next morning.

A mentor must himself abstain from sins

Those who are occupied in the work of rectification must ensure that they themselves abstain from sins so that the benefit can be passed on to others. I notice people are particular about certain acts of worship while neglecting others which are more important. It is desirable to perform optional salāh but it is obligatory to remove the evils of the carnal self. Yet, people are not paying attention to this. This is a major tribulation. When a person abstains from sins, a special light develops in his heart. Hadrat Maulānā Thānwī *rahimahullāh* used to say: "Resolve to abstain from backbiting for one week and then see if the condition of the heart changes or not. You will certainly experience some light."

Going back to the person who asked me the names of books from which he could learn about the carnal self, I directed him towards good actions. I did this so that he realizes that knowledge is not the objective; action is. We have embraced knowledge and disregarded actions. If the importance of actions was in our minds, we would certainly act on the knowledge which we have. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to those who have knowledge but do not follow it with actions:

مَثَلُ الَّذِيْنَ حُمِّلُوا التَّوْرَاةَ ثُمَّ لَمْ يَحْمِلُوْهَا كَمَثَلِ الْحِمَارِ يَحْمِلُ اَسْفَارًا

The similitude of those upon whom the burden of the Taurāh was laid, then did not bear it, is like that of an ass bearing a load of books on its back.[1]

Shaykh Saʿdī *rahimahullāh* explains the same theme in his *Gulistān*:

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[1] Sūrah al-Jumuʿah, 62: 5.

> No matter how much knowledge you acquire, if there is no practical application of it in your life, you are an ignoramus. You will neither be referred to as an erudite scholar nor a learned person. Instead, you will be regarded like an animal which is loaded with books.

In other words, if a donkey is loaded with some books, can it benefit from them in any way? Similarly, if a person knows several books by heart, but is devoid of action, then he and the donkey are the same in the sense that both did not benefit from those books. Allāh *taʿālā* presented this similitude to instil some shame in an ʿālim and to prompt him towards action. The ʿulamā' must take a lesson from it. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

A SEEKER MUST POSSESS INSIGHT

The reason why people are not benefiting from the T̲arīqah today is that they are not observing the etiquette and prerequisites of the T̲arīqah. Just as there are etiquette for everything else, there are etiquette for the T̲arīqah. Bearing in mind that this is Allāh's path, just imagine the type of etiquette it will have and how important it will be to observe them. The erudite ʿulamā' say in this regard:

حرموا الوصول لتضييعهم الأصول.

People are deprived of reaching Allāh taʿālā because they discard the principles.

The books of tas̲awwuf contain etiquette which must be observed by both the shaykh and the murīd. The mashā'ikh say with regard to admitting a person in the T̲arīqah or refusing him admission:

على الشيخ أن لا يقبل المريد حتى يختبره وينظر قابليته، فإن وجده غير قابل ردّه. وإذا وجده قابلا للسلوك فليأخذه بطريق المجاهدة وليحاسبه على أنفاسه وحركاته، ويضيق عليه على قدر صدقه.[1]

A shaykh must not accept a murīd without first testing him and assessing his capabilities. If he finds him incapable, he must refuse him. If he finds him capable for the path, he must accept him by placing him on the path of spiritual striving and exertion, and by supervising his every breath and movement. He must also impose on him based on his sincerity (so that

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[1] ترصيع، ص ٢٨.

when he bears the impositions, he may complete his journey on this path. Without this, a person cannot reach any station).

Did you see the strict pre-admission test in the Ṯarīqah! Nowadays no one ever bothers about this. In other words, differentiating between those who are capable and those who are not has disappeared. Consequently, the original Ṯarīqah has also departed. If this level of quest and dedication was not found in a seeker, the mashā'ikh did not deprive him completely. Instead, they established the system of bay'at-e-tabarruk (a pledge for the acquisition of blessings) so that these people can at least acquire the blessings of the Ahlullāh.

The author of *Tarṣ̱ī'* writes:

وأما غالب مشايخ الزمن فإنما يلقون الذكر بقصد التبرّك حتى يدخل المريد في سلسلة القوم ومحبيهم والتسليم والاعتقاد لمقالتهم.

Most of the mashā'ikh of today teach and instruct dhikr to their murīds for the sake of acquiring blessings so that the murīd may enter the spiritual lineage of the mashā'ikh, and so that he is included among those who love them, accept them and believe in their statements.

ولا يجوز لهم التلقين على غير هذا الوجه وكذلك لباس الخرقة وإرخاء العذبة، إنما هو لمحض التبرك بزعم القوم، ومع هذا فلا يعدون من اتباعهم إلا إذا كانوا على طريقتهم التي كانوا عليها من الزهد والورع وترك الفضول، وخوف الله تعالى.

It is not permissible for the mashā'ikh to teach dhikr in any other way. Similarly, the practices of making a

murīd wear a garment and a turban are also for blessings (so that the murīd will at least emulate the mashā'ikh externally). Despite all this, the mashā'ikh do not consider such murīds to be their followers until and unless they also follow them on the path of abstention, asceticism, abstaining from futilities, and fear of Allāh taʿālā.

ومن هنا قيل إن الطريق من النصف الثاني في القرن العاشر صارت إسما لا رسما، لا الخيام كخيامهم ولا نساء الحي نساوه.

In the light of these conditions, it is said that the Ṯarīqah was reduced to the Ṯarīqah only in name from the second half of the tenth century. In other words, its reality no longer existed. This is why even their tents are no longer like theirs, nor have any other indications remained.

This clearly shows that an unworthy murīd can be kept but not for the path of sulūk. Rather, merely for blessings. The author explains this further in the footnotes. Those who are unworthy are not maintained on the path of sulūk because they are not capable for it. Their shaykh/murīd relationship is only in appearance. Despite this, the benefit of it is that it is a means for establishing a bond with the Sufis and having love for them. This results in the hearts becoming attached to each other. In other words, the murīd's heart with that of his shaykh's, the shaykh's with his own shaykh's, until this link reaches Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* Consequently, the murīd receives internal and spiritual benefits from Rasūlullāh *s̱allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* This benefit is certainly not small.

However, when the time comes for others to revert to these murīds, then it is not permissible for them to

instruct them in this path because they did not learn this work, and they neither went to the mashā'ikh with this in mind nor remained in their company for this purpose. It is therefore wājib on them that if anyone comes to learn the Ṯarīqah from them, they must say: "We are only externally attached to the Ṯarīqah; we do not have the internal qualities of the mashā'ikh."

Ponder over these conditions of the mashā'ikh and see their level of integrity. Nowadays neither is such integrity found in the shaykh nor in the murīd. How, then, can they benefit from the Ṯarīqah? The prerequisite for accepting a murīd as stated in *Tarsīʿ* is explained in another way in *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl*. I am quoting it here to clarify the point further.

ومنها أن يجب على الشيخ أن لا يقبل مريدا حتى يختبر بأن يعلم أنه من طلاب الدنيا أو الآخرة، أو طالب الله أو هل هو من أهل الغفلة أو التيقظ، أو هو محقق على بصيرة في الإرادة، أو مقلد تابع لرسوم الخلق.[1]

From among the etiquette which are applicable to the shaykh is that he must not accept a murīd until he ascertains whether the latter is desirous of this world or of the Hereafter, or he is seeking Allāh taʿālā. Moreover, he must check whether he is from the negligent or the vigilant. Also, is he merely following the customs of people or is his desire to become a murīd based on a genuine insightful intention.

The author of *Manhaj al-ʿUmmāl* is also saying that it is necessary for a shaykh to test a murīd before admitting him into the Ṯarīqah. He then provides

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[1] منهج العمال، أز بياض حضرت والا.

details about this test. That is, he must check whether he is desirous of this world or of the Hereafter. Is he a negligent person or a vigilant one. Is he merely following customs or does he have full insight as regards his intention.

I would like to add something about insight. The author made a most valuable and essential statement. In other words, just as it is essential for a murīd to commence his journey in this path on sincerity, as stated by the mashā'ikh:

فأول قدم للمريد في هذه الطريقة ينبغي أن يكون على الصدق

It is necessary that a murīd's first step in this path be on sincerity.

In like manner, when he intends entering the Ṯarīqah, the shaykh must check whether the murīd is doing it with insight or not.

The definition of basīrat

It is generally assumed that basīrat (insight) is a quality of the shaykh and is acquired by the experts and masters only. The 'ulamā' define basīrat as follows:

هي قوة للقلب المنور بنور القدس يرى بها حقائق الأشياء وبواطنها بمثابة البصر للنفس كما في التعريفات للسيد.

Basīrat is a power within the heart of a person which is illuminated by the light of Allāh taʿālā. Through it, a person can see the reality of things and their internal points. This is exactly like how the self has the power of sight through which he can see the external forms of things.

It is true that only the mashā'ikh enjoy the highest level of basīrat, but it has different levels. One such level is enjoyed by a novice. In the previous quotation it was stated that the shaykh must check if the murīd has insight or not. The basīrat in this context refers to this level which a novice enjoys. In other words, the shaykh must see if the murīd has insight which is in line with his condition. This means he must have that level of insight through which he can decide on following this path and in the selection of a shaykh. Insight as regards following the path means that he must think about it carefully before he can tread it. He must realize that it is Allāh's path and it will have tests and tribulations which he will have to bear.

The 'ulamā' state that a person will have to enter the Tarīqah with this intention and resolution that no matter how much his self dislikes obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, how much loss he suffers as regards his wealth and life, no matter how much personal or worldly benefit he loses, and no matter how much the people criticize him; he will not give up his obedience to Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Obviously, such a strong resolution cannot be realized without basīrat. The reason why basīrat is so important for a seeker is that without it, his entry into the Tarīqah is not considered. If he does not have basīrat, a small push or shove will be enough to remove him from this path.

The murīd also needs basīrat as regards his selection of a shaykh. When he makes someone his shaykh, he must have faith and confidence in him. He must realize that he is a shaykh who has Allāh's recognition, and who knows the ups and downs of the path. The shaykh himself has reached Allāh *taʿālā*

and has the ability to convey others to Allāh *taʿālā*. The reason why this much of basīrat is necessary is that many difficulties are encountered in this path.

The shaykh will test his murīd. In fact, the Sufi masters say that if a shaykh observes a genuine quest in the seeker, he must put him on the path of striving and scrutinize all his movements with a sharp eye. Furthermore, he must impose restrictions on him in proportion to his genuineness.

If a murīd's selection of a shaykh is not based on basīrat – i.e. not after thinking about it carefully – it is possible he will consider an instruction of the shaykh to be too strict and harsh which will then result in bad thoughts about the shaykh, and he may even raise objections against him. It has been observed that when a murīd has basīrat, he does not leave his shaykh under any condition. How can he leave him when the blessings of his shaykh have reached him by virtue of his sincerity? If a murīd leaves the court of a genuine shaykh, it will be proof that he did not have basīrat and confidence in the shaykh from the very beginning. Listen to the following incident on this subject:

A shaykh said to his murīds: "You are aware of the fact that the ʿurs which takes place here was initiated and popularized by me. However, I was in the wrong and I was doing something which is against the Sharīʿat. Allāh *taʿālā* guided me so I am now telling you that there will no longer be an ʿurs or any similar custom."

On hearing this, all the murīds became angry with him, stood up and left his assembly saying: "He is not a hājī; he is a pājī (a scoundrel)." (We seek forgiveness from Allāh *taʿālā*)

The shaykh was not bothered about how many people attend his assembly and how many do not. However, when he turned around and looked, he saw one murīd sitting in his place. The shaykh asked him: "Brother, why didn't you leave?" He replied: "Why should I go? I selected you as my shaykh and I will follow you." The murīd then pointed towards a nearby grave and said: "Even if the shaykh from this grave emerges from it and asks me to leave you I will not leave."

This was the level of his basīrat in the sense that he held on to the shaykh after thinking and pondering over the matter carefully. Therefore there is no question of being displeased with the shaykh and losing confidence in him over trivial matters.

People of the past used to work with principles; this is why they succeeded. The situation was not like how it is today where people know nothing about faith and confidence in the shaykh, and they have no basīrat. They feel that mere physical closeness is everything and sufficient.

This is a spiritual path; not a physical one

I constantly explain to people that this path is not a physical path; it is a spiritual one. It is to do with the heart. But people do not understand. Instead, they think that we desire large crowds and physical services. This is why they are happy with large crowds and physical proximity. They feel that if they make us happy – i.e. they fulfil our expectations – then they will receive khilāfat very quickly.

I say that this is most shameful for the mashā'ikh but sadly, the murīds are to a certain extent correct in their thoughts. Study the etiquette for the shaykh, murīds and the Tarīqah in the books; and then look at the practices of the people. You will find no similarity

between the two. For example, bas̲īrat was an important prerequisite for a murīd. Yet how many people today revert to a shaykh on the basis of bas̲īrat? And how many mashā'ikh are there who demand this bas̲īrat from their murīds? In fact, not very long ago, if a shaykh practised on these principles – i.e. accepted or rejected a murīd on the basis of his bas̲īrat – then instead of listing this among the shaykh's salient qualities, people raise objections against him. Not only that, they even went to the extent of rejecting him. The more surprising thing about this is that the 'ulamā' are more vociferous than the masses in their objections against such a shaykh. In other words, those of whom it was expected that they would recognize the true worth of such a shaykh and support him did the opposite by being even more opposed to him.

A khalīfah calls his shaykh a Christian

I saw this with my own eyes. A shaykh conferred khilāfat to one of his murīds and appointed him as his confidant. But when he began having bad thoughts about his shaykh, then the very same shaykh whom he used to refer to as an 'allāmah and a qut̲b, he now referred to as a Christian.

Do you know the cause of this deterioration? It is the same absence of bas̲īrat. The evil in the man did not develop in him today; rather from the very beginning he had no bas̲īrat when he appointed the shaykh as his shaykh and he had no confidence in him. If not, he would not have done this.

What a sad state of affairs. On one hand you have an ordinary person saying that even if you, your shaykh or his shaykh ask me to leave you I will not leave. And on the other hand you have an 'ālim stooping to such

a level. This is a most admonitory incident. An ordinary murīd has basīrat while an ʿālim doesn't?! It is most astonishing.

It is observed that an ignorant person who has full faith and confidence in his shaykh does not change; he remains constant. But there are many ʿulamā' who changed. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

Investigate before selecting a shaykh

We learn from the statements of the mashā'ikh that a murīd must first be certain in his intention. In other words, taqlīd is not required at the exact time of wanting to become a murīd. For example, a certain shaykh is popular so he runs behind him. Instead, he must appoint a shaykh as his guide after full investigation and with basīrat.

Hadrat Maulānā Sayyid Sulaymān Nadwī *rahimahullāh* used to say that if you want to pledge bayʿat to anyone, you must think about it carefully even if it takes you ten years. He pledged bayʿat to Hadrat Hakīmul Ummat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* after many years of investigation and inquiry. Once you choose someone as your shaykh, it is not permissible for you to make objections because the slightest slip up will result in your eternal misguidance. When a shaykh is chosen after investigation and with basīrat, the murīd must follow him and make his taqlīd in matters related to his rectification. But today the people do the opposite. In other words, when it is the time to investigate, they make taqlīd; and when they have to make taqlīd, they start making investigations.

An ʿālim personally said to me: "We pledged bayʿat to such and such shaykh." I said: "Hadrat Maulānā [Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī] *rahimahullāh* had a high regard

for your father, and you yourself used to go to Thānah Bhawan. Did you not derive any benefit from Hadrat Maulānā?" He replied: "Yes. I was studying in Deoband. I took one of my father's letters and went to Thānah Bhawan. Hadrat Maulānā was most affectionate towards me and I also had the honour of being in his service. But I did not turn my attention towards rectification even though my father constantly advised me to go to Thānah Bhawan. At that time, I did not understand these things. Then one day while I was in Deoband, I saw many students pledging bay'at to a certain shaykh, so I followed suite."

This is an example of making taqlīd at a time when a person ought to have investigated first. He is just one example; there are countless others like him – they don't investigate. How will they ever investigate when they don't even know that they are supposed to investigate!? Sometimes when a person pledges bay'at to someone without investigation, he ends up regretting it. What is the benefit of regretting now?

TWO IMPORTANT THEMES FROM THE MATHNAWĪ

A major portion of Maulānā Rūm's words centre around two themes: (1) the objective, i.e. the oneness of Allāh *taʿālā*, (2) the method, i.e. following a Sufi master. Furthermore, the Maulānā is an expert in explaining major realities through stories and anecdotes. The story of the unseen physician is related at the beginning of his book. He titles it as follows:

The story of a king who falls in love with a slave-girl. He purchases her, while she remains in eternal grief because she was in love with a goldsmith. The king tries to treat her but because pseudo-physicians treat her, her illness increases. The king finally finds an unseen physician whose plan works out for the better. Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* writes in this regard:

Now that you have learnt the cause of lightness and darkness, it is your duty to rid your heart of the rust. Only then will you perceive the light of Allāh *taʿālā*. You can learn the method of getting rid of the rust from this example. You will have to listen to this story because it is in line with our condition. The similarity between the two is that just as the king fell in love with the slave-girl, the soul (the king) fell in love with the carnal self (the slave-girl) and became obedient to it. Just as the slave-girl was in love with the goldsmith, the carnal self is in love with worldly pleasures. The king reverted to unqualified physicians so he did not benefit from them. In the same way, if a person reverts to unqualified mashā'ikh, he will not benefit from them. The physician from the unseen treated this condition by giving the goldsmith a medicine which caused him to appear extremely ugly. This resulted in the slave-girl disliking him. In the

same way, an expert shaykh separates worldly pleasures gradually from the carnal self. The self eventually gives them up completely and it gains salvation from carnal illnesses. The king (the soul) also benefits from this. The gist of this is that if you want to free yourself from the goldsmith, you must revert to an expert shaykh and act on his instructions. He will rectify you in a manner which is suited to you. I said "gradually" because if you try to give up worldly pleasures all at once, you will not be able to give them up. Only an expert shaykh can understand this. He is an expert in his field and is also extremely affectionate towards his patients. This is why they become healthy at his hands.

On the other hand, an unqualified shaykh will leave you confused throughout your life and you will derive no benefit whatsoever from him. I am telling you that this is not easy. It is neither easy for a physician to be an expert, proficient and affectionate; nor is it easy for a patient to identify an expert.

Do you know how this entire effort became spoilt? When we go anywhere, the masses adulate us but we do not bother about them. Our bother for them entails teaching them Dīn. I am speaking clearly and frankly. If you understand it, well and good. When we see people of a certain place following us, coming to the station to meet us, coming in large crowds to shake hands with us, then we think that we have achieved our objective. What objective? That people must accept us. If this is achieved, then the original objective of conveying Dīn to them is lost.

The difference between an unqualified shaykh and a qualified one

Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh* made reference to an unqualified shaykh, so listen in this regard. Nowadays no one speaks about this. Do you think that unqualified shaykh's existed only in his era and that they are not found today? Why do people not speak about them? There is certainly a difference between a qualified shaykh and an unqualified one. A qualified shaykh does not focus on his personal profit and loss. Instead, he is most affectionate and concerned, and through his words and actions he is saying in the words of a poet:

> I am swallowing your grief, there is no need for you to worry. I am more affectionate to you than 100 fathers.

An unqualified or pseudo-shaykh worries about his own benefits. This is the criterion as explained by Maulānā Rūm *rahimahullāh*. I am not saying it, so you people cannot get angry at me.

It is not easy for a person to be concerned and worried about another, and to bear his grief for him.

An expert physician is one who has concern for the sick, and he himself becomes concerned and sick by their illness. In the same way, an expert shaykh is one who has the pain of the people in his heart, and is always grieved and sick over their pitiable condition. This is why I am saying that it is not easy to be on such a level. It is very easy to sit, talk and converse; just as it is very easy for you people to assemble before a person. However, nothing can be accomplished by that alone. Rectification requires something much more. The seniors of Dīn of every era did their utmost to understand this, and they delved

on the topic of who is qualified and who is not. They say that the most harmful thing is the company of an unqualified or pseudo-shaykh. And an unqualified shaykh is one who has no concern about his perfection. As for the one who has some concern about his perfection, he is not qualified but he is heading in that direction. The company of the one who is aware of his defects is not harmful. This worry and concern of his will develop the concern for perfection in others. If not Dīn, he will at least acquire a concern for Dīn and will express remorse over the fact that he is not religious. A grief of this nature is not to be disregarded. Even if the pain of failure develops in a seeker, it is a boon. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Rashīd Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib Gangohī *rah̲imahullāh* writes to a seeker as follows:

> If you acquire remorse and the pain of failure after striving for a thousand years, you have acquired everything. If you do not get the light from the sun, you will certainly receive its heat.

An unqualified shaykh is harmful

In the previously quoted incident, Maulānā Rūm *rah̲imahullāh* said that the king first sought treatment for the slave-girl from unqualified physicians and did not benefit in any way. In fact, the more they treated her the more her ailment increased. The treatment which eventually proved to be beneficial was from the physician of the unseen. An expert physician has no need for fees and he does not keep a stock of medicines. He merely writes a prescription and asks the patient to obtain the medication from wherever he wants. His main concern is the wellbeing and good health of his patient. In fact, his concern and affection are of such a level that he himself falls ill on account

of his patient. And he feels better when his patient feels better. This is why I said that it is not easy to be like this; and this is the meaning of affection.

There was a doctor who used to say that he benefits from the poor people. When I heard this, I thought to myself that this is a real doctor. An expert is always selfless. In fact, he considers even a taint of selfishness to be an insult to him. In the same way, a qualified shaykh falls ill on behalf of everyone. He bears the grief of all his murīds and is constantly worried about how to rectify them. He has no personal motives. This is why he does not even desire the praises of people. Whether someone praises him or not, speaks highly of him or disparages him – everyone is equal in his sight. The objective of his work is Allāh's pleasure and being of use to Allāh's creation. Of what use is there if someone praises his talk? What personal benefit does he get from it? The most he can do is obtain the praises of people; but there is no real benefit. On the contrary, when people praise him verbally, see to his needs, invite him for meals, and so on; then these things certainly damage his body and soul. Eating too much will cause physical damage. And when he is praised, his carnal self will feel bloated – this will cause him spiritual damage.

What I am trying to explain to you is that eloquence and articulacy are adjectives for words, they are not adjectives for the heart and soul. This issue has been very well understood by a poet of your city, Allāhābād. He is Akbar Husayn. He said:

> Dīn is not born out of books, lectures and riches. It is born from the gaze of the saints.

You take so much of joy in quoting this couplet yet when we say the same thing you feel offended. There is no denying the benefit of eloquence and articulacy. Nonetheless, what I want to show you is that the point which your poet understood has not been understood by your speakers and orators. It is so unfortunate. The effect of rhetoric is accepted, but it is not possible to acquire spirituality through it. A poet may select the best words and arrange them in a most beautiful manner, but it is not possible for his own self to come to life in the same manner and to turn his focus on it while he can stir on others through it. This is because a genuine spiritual condition will not develop merely from words. Rather, there is a need to create spirituality in them. I am trying to make you understand the same point which the poet of your city understood.

He knows that people cannot succeed by mere words nor from listening only. Instead, if the speakers and listeners want to be successful, they will need spirituality as well. Even now if a few people were to speak on this subject, we can succeed. In other words, we say to them that we are not in need of the respect and admiration which you give to us. We want you to learn Dīn. There is no benefit in falling at someone's feet without forethought and understanding. How shameful it will be for us when people assemble around us after thinking that we are religious, yet we do not make this a means for connecting them to Allāh *taʿālā*! Instead, we make their adoration and admiration our objectives! This is such a terrible thing to do.

People accepted the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh of every era. However, because they were sincere, they were not satisfied with a mere bond. Instead, they used

that bond as a means to create a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Man cannot learn this of his own accord. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* came into this world to teach this to us. The seniors of Dīn strove in this regard and sacrificed their lives for it. Only then where they able to teach the people, and the people were able to understand.

Nowadays we feel that if we invite outside scholars once or twice a year, and have them to deliver dynamic speeches, then the entire community will be rectified and reformed. Listen! You will not achieve much by doing just that. You will have to search for qualified people. In fact, people in every town and village will have to revert to qualified people from whom they must learn Dīn. If a person is not qualified himself and does not know the path himself, how will he be able to guide and steer others? A poet says:

> If you haven't seen the path yourself, how can you be a guide for others? O you who does not know! Strive so that you come to know.
>
> O son! Strive and work hard before the teacher and litterateur so that you can become a teacher and litterateur in the future.

Rectification is done through local ʿulamā

Rectification is always done by local ʿulamāʾ. If people do not learn from their local ʿulamāʾ, their rectification can never be realized. Yes, if the local ʿulamāʾ are not able, an outside ʿālim must be invited. But he must be given sufficient opportunities to serve and do work. In other words, he must be invited regularly. The benefit of this is that he too will realize that the people want

to learn from him; and so he will take it as a responsibility and serve them with all his heart.

As for the present practice of inviting one scholar today and another one tomorrow, this will cause each scholar to assume that the basis for the Dīnī work in this area does not revolve around him. Instead, others also come here. Consequently, his focus will certainly decrease and he will not perceive it as his responsibility. There is nothing but harm for you. Every task can be accomplished when its procedure is followed. And the procedure is as I described above. That is, if the people of an area learn Dīn from their local ʿulamā', much more will be achieved. Yes, if there is no ʿālim in the town, then you have no alternative. It is still necessary for you to learn Dīn. You will have to emigrate to another place and study Dīn there.

This is my view in this regard. If you understood it, well and good, and accept it. If not, you can do as you want. However, if we are also present in your times, why should our views not be relied upon? If you accept the views of everyone else, why should you not accept ours? Nowadays everyone has the right to vote. We also have that right and so do our murīds. So this is our view in this regard. If it appeals to your understanding then accept it and act accordingly. If not, do as you like.

When a person does something according to the procedure which is laid down for it, he will certainly see its fruits according to his efforts. If he strives more, he will receive more. If he strives less, he will see less. He will not be deprived totally.

Understand what the procedure is. It is sincerity. In other words, if a person is a lecturer, there must be sincerity in his lecture. Just as sincerity is essential for him, so is it for the audience. The speaker must

speak for Allāh's sake, and the audience must listen for Allāh's sake.

Let me tell you something – you will find very few people really understanding those dynamic and forceful speeches which you hear, and talks which are filled with eloquence and rhetoric. This is because a person has to have some intelligence to understand a thing; and people do not have it nowadays. If they do not understand a talk, what benefit will they gain from it?

There was a grammarian by the name of Akhfash. He had a goat which he had domesticated. He would hold the goat by its ear and explain one grammar rule to it. He would then release its ear and ask: "Did you understand?" As per its habit, the goat would shake its head. Akhfash would conclude from this that it did not understand. So he would repeat the lesson a second and a third time. By doing this, he became a well known grammarian. In the same way, the lecturers and orators continually deliver talks to the masses who do not understand anything. The lecturers and orators become experts in their field while the masses remain as they were. They neither have any affinity with knowledge nor with practice. The orator thus reaches a high rank while the masses remain as they were. I am saying this from experience. You people cannot object in the least to it.

I also notice that a lot of money is spent on a jalsah. Several hundred rupees are spent on small flags alone. These things neither bring any Dīnī benefit to the people nor any worldly benefit. If they were to spend the same amount on the poor, I don't know how many stomachs would get filled with it. You will not understand all these things so at least listen to this much – there is no benefit in merely assembling like

this. I see the same condition in the madāris. A class will have a hundred students but not a single one understands the teacher’s lesson. In the same way, people assemble around the mashā’ikh and want to take all their time away, but they do not understand a single point. What action will they do? The fact of the matter is that the ‘ulamā’ are frightened of you. This is why they do not teach you Dīn. I am saying these things to you because I have removed that fear from me. For how long can a person continue fearing you people?

I told you previously that work can only be achieved when the correct procedure is followed. And that is for an ‘ālim to be an expert in the external and internal sciences. Allāh *ta‘ālā* says:

وَمَا كَانَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ لِيَنْفِرُوْا كَآفَّةً ۚ فَلَوْ لَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِّنْهُمْ طَآئِفَةٌ لِّيَتَفَقَّهُوْا فِي الدِّيْنِ وَلِيُنْذِرُوْا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوْآ إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُوْنَ.

It is not [proper] for the Muslims to go forth all together. Why, then, did a section from each group not go forth so that the remaining ones may acquire an understanding of religion and inform their people when they return to them so that they might be on their guard?[1]

There are several benefits in a group remaining behind. A major benefit is a Dīnī benefit which is mentioned in the verse itself. There are also worldly benefits in this. For example if everyone goes out, it is not far fetched for the Islamic state itself to lose its control. Acquiring an understanding of religion is specifically reserved for the “remaining ones” because

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[1] Sūrah at-Taubah, 9: 122.

knowledge is generally acquired within a town or city, or when a person is not travelling. (*Bayān al-Qur'ān*)

Did you see what the seniors of Dīn are saying! Yet, you feel that if you invite a scholar from outside – and that too, just once or twice a year – it is enough. You do not see the need for an ʿālim in every residential area. I say that there is a need for ʿulamā' to work in every area or else the entire nation will go astray. It will then become extremely difficult to teach Dīn. When an entire nation is affected by something, it is very difficult to remove. In order for the work to succeed, it is essential for you to hold on to an ʿālim. As long as you do not hold on to someone, the work will not be done.

What I am saying to you is the fact, but you are probably thinking to yourself that these words are not appealing, and the speech is not dynamic. So my answer to you is that take this subject matter from me and present it to an ʿālim who will rephrase it with appealing words.

Unity of purpose is a most important issue which has been discussed for many centuries. The ʿulamā' say that just as there is one Allāh for the entire universe, and just as a woman has only one husband, in the same way a person has only one shaykh. When the objective is one, the path is one. If you are going to hold on to several shaykhs, it will result in confusion. In the same way, if you decide on one speaker or orator, you will benefit to a certain extent. When you have one teacher, it becomes easy for you to develop an affinity with him. But if you study something under one teacher, then leave him for another teacher, and then go on to a third; you will not develop an affinity with any of them. You will not learn anything because it is possible that one is religious while the other is

not, or one is a distinguished scholar while the other is not. In such a case, the student will not know who to turn to.

I have noticed that when a student remains devoted to one teacher, he is successful. As for the one whose focus is constantly moving, he is never successful.

I said previously that sincerity is essential – both for the shaykh and the murīd. In the same way, it is essential for the speaker and the listeners. When a person maintains a bond with one person, he acquires his affection and special attention. You can understand this through the following example. If a person invites just you to a meal, you will perceive some special treatment. But if he has an open invitation for a large number of people and you are also invited, you will not perceive that much of special treatment.

When a sincere person speaks to people about Dīn, they will most certainly pay heed. I am a Muslim and you are Muslims. If we speak about Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, then how can we not accept it and pay heed? Yes, if someone identifies an ulterior motive, he will not accept. But if he realizes that the shaykh wants to make him a strict follower of the Sunnat and that whatever he is saying is solely for his wellbeing, he will certainly pay heed. Many people of the past accepted the mashā'ikh and sacrificed their lives in this path.

The essential point is to make people understand. If they are not made to understand, their condition will go from bad to worse. The seniors noted all these things down, and said that personal taqlīd is necessary for the preservation of these teachings. In our times this is the means of preserving Dīn. If permission was given to follow the views of all the

Imāms, people will follow the desires of the carnal self. If the view of a certain Imām is in line with a person's desire, he will adopt that view. This will entail following of one's desires, and not following of Dīn. The same rule has been laid down by the 'ulamā' and mashā'ikh in the field of rectification and reformation. They say that one can gain maximum benefit from just one shaykh.

The 'ulamā' explained detailed rules about taking benefit from several mashā'ikh. The seniors write in the books of the Ṯarīqat that situations and conditions differ. Does a person want to acquire blessings from several people or does he want to receive training from each of them? If the objective is blessings, he may acquire from whomever he wants. There are no restrictions in this regard. A person can find many blessed people. He can go to several people for blessings – there is no kingship in this in the sense that one is antagonistic towards the other.

However, if a person desires training, then the principles for it are laid down by the mashā'ikh. They say that training must be from one person. The mashā'ikh who laid down this principle are pure from evil and castigation, and they are most honest and selfless people. They unanimously state that a person must have just one shaykh towards whom a murīd is drawn, and before whom he submits. The murīd is so subdued by the shaykh that his self becomes absorbed by him, and he complies with him as regards his orders and prohibitions as though he is a corpse in the hand of the one who is bathing him.

If a person cannot find a shaykh whose spiritual condition draws him to himself, he must check who from the present mashā'ikh is most abstinent, and

has recognized the rules of the Sharīʿat and Ṯarīqat the most. He must then include himself as his murīd.

The mashā'ikh also state that when a person finds the first or second type of shaykh, it is not permissible for him to leave him and go to someone else. If his self tries to deceive him into thinking that a certain shaykh is more qualified than his own, he must not act on it in the least. In other words, he must not go to meet him with the intention of training. As for going to him for blessings, duʿā', to serve him, etc. no one has prohibited this. If a murīd is so overwhelmed by his own shaykh that he does not pay the least attention to another shaykh, then this is another matter which stems from his intense love and affection for his shaykh. He cannot be reprimanded for this.

I was saying to you that once a person finds a qualified shaykh, it is not permissible for him to flee from him and go to someone else. The reason for this is that it sometimes stems from following the desires of the self. In other words, he is probably falling short in fulfilling the rights of his shaykh and feels frustrated, so he wants to flee from him. It is not permissible for him to do this. Assuming he does go to another shaykh, and the latter comes to know that he has fled from a certain shaykh who is qualified, then it is not permissible for the second shaykh to accept him. He must return him to the first shaykh.

There are many whose ability has been taken away from them when they see severity in the training programme of a shaykh. They turn away from such a shaykh and start accusing him of defects and evils which he is totally free from in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*. Now this person who has been deprived wants to deprive others as well. The carnal self is a person's

enemy which wants to destroy the person. He must never follow his self especially in matters related to objections against one's shaykh. Even if he sees him on the lowest of conditions, he must find a suitable explanation for it, try to give a good reason for it, and consider it to be an acceptable objective.

Understand well that when a person finds suitable explanations for the doings of the mashā'ikh, disregards their conditions, refers their matter to Allāh *taʿālā*, devotes himself to worrying about his own self, and strives to this end according to his ability; then there is hope that such a person will realize his internal and external objectives in a very short time. On the other hand, the one who opens the door of objections against the mashā'ikh, and looks at the actions and statements with a critical eye – then it is a sign of deprivation and a bad death. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. Such a person can never find success.

Nowadays I see that people really agree about making objections about a qualified shaykh when they come across one. Even the educated people have made peace with the laity – both get together to criticize the mashā'ikh. Is this what you call knowledge? Real knowledge means that a person is able to recognize the good and evil in beliefs – this is acquired through the science of *ʿilm al-kalām* (scholastic theology). In the same way, he must be able to differentiate between good and bad character. This is the responsibility of the science of taṣawwuf. Furthermore, he must know about good and bad actions. This is taken care of by the science of fiqh or jurisprudence. Now if a person cannot differentiate between good and bad even after studying and teaching, and he cannot distinguish the qualified from

the unqualified, then of what benefit was his knowledge?

If he objects to a saint because he saw a most insignificant condition in him, it means that his knowledge did not benefit him in any way. You probably did not understand what “a most insignificant condition” means, so listen in this regard. Just yesterday I hit a student because of some of his unacceptable actions. You people saw it and you must have thought that it is “a most insignificant condition” while I felt that it was essential to hit him at that time. He was given a punishment in line with his crime.

جَزَآءً وِّفَاقًا

A full recompense.[1]

Now listen, the student has come right. You are considering it to be “a most insignificant condition” while it resulted in “a most significant condition” in him. This is what you call tarbīyyat – training – which is needed occasionally.

Someone said to H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* that he is experiencing evil whisperings which are urging him to renounce Islam and become a Christian. H̲ad̲rat *rah̲imahullāh* gave him a hard slap and said: “Go, go far away. Islam is offended at having a shameless man like you.” The person relates himself: “When H̲ad̲rat struck me, the thought crossed my mind that if I left here, there is no good for me. I will have to confine myself within these four walls. The whispering came to an end.”

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[1] Sūrah an-Naba’, 78: 26.

Now I ask you, if a person is protected from becoming a renegade by giving him one slap, can it considered to be a bad thing? This is my explanation on "an insignificant condition".

The other principle which the mashā'ikh laid down [as mentioned previously] is that you must select a shaykh whose condition attracts the murīd to him, and makes him submissive before him. Now listen to an explanation of this principle.

It is stated in the book of jurisprudence, *ad-Durr al-Mukhtār*, that if people pledge bay'at to an imām and he is unable to exercise his authority over them – and is in fact, lacking and incapable in this regard – then he will not remain an imām notwithstanding the pledge which was given to him. I say, the same applies to a shaykh. In fact, it applies to an 'ālim and a lecturer/speaker as well. In other words, if he cannot have an effect on them, then what kind of 'ālim is he? And what kind of shaykh is he if the seekers cannot benefit from him?

These are rules and regulations as laid down by the 'ulamā'. There is no issue of Dīn regarding which full details are not found. This is why we have to convey Dīn to the people clearly and frankly whether anyone accepts or not.

A liberal attitude has crept into the temperaments of people. Consequently, they don't understand when they are spoken to in a soft manner. This is why a shaykh has to resort to sternness occasionally. However, when he resorts to strictness in the field of training and rectification, people consider it to be a defect in him. With reference to this the mashā'ikh say that those whose abilities have been taken away from them will do this, but those who abilities are still

intact must not resort to this. They must abstain from it and understand the reality.

A blind man went to pledge bayʿat to a shaykh. The shaykh declined. The man began to cry. After some time, a few people saw him in an ʿurs. They asked him: "You had come to pledge bayʿat to Hadrat, how come you are here?" He replied: "I had left home early and there was still time for the ʿurs to take place. So I thought to myself, let me pledge bayʿat so that my meals will be sorted out [by remaining in the khānqāh of the shaykh]."

A man went to a shaykh and requested him to accept his bayʿat. The shaykh declined. A man took him to his house and spoke to him for a long period of time, keeping him awake. When he eventually fell into a deep sleep, he removed his purse from around his neck and found governmental documents there. He was a secret police who had come to pledge bayʿat!? If the shaykh did not have insight, he would have fallen into many problems.

You are answerable for your knowledge and he is answerable for his. If you do not have knowledge about something then submit yourself before it, and convince your self that it could be something which you can learn later on. If you are still not able to learn about it and you are quite confused, then go to the person and ask him why he did what he did. He will explain the reason.

To sum up, if you want your rectification then revert to a qualified shaykh because you will not find a solution without reverting to a qualified shaykh. Even if it takes long for you to find a qualified shaykh, let it be so. But once you find him, you must follow him completely without any ifs and buts. You must hand yourself over to him like a corpse in the hands of the

one bathing him. Only then can you succeed. Understand this well.

FOLLOWING THE SUNNAT IS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS

Following the Sunnat is most essential. The Qur'ān says in this regard:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

This verse shows the obligation of following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Another verse proves the necessity of following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* together with those believers who turn to Allāh *taʿālā*.

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

Follow the way of the one who has turned to Me.[2]

However, the order to follow the believers applies only to those believers who follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and do not turn away from him in the least. Following them entails following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

Nothing can be achieved without following someone – neither in matters of Dīn nor in worldly matters. There is an uproar at the moment, and no one is prepared to listen to anyone. There is no junior and no senior. The intelligent and unintelligent have all become equal. Each one has become an authority. H̲ad̲rat Maulānā H̲abīb ar-Rah̲mān S̲āh̲ib ʿUthmānī *rah̲imahullāh* quotes the following H̲adīth in *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

[2] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

لن يزال الناس بخير ما تباينوا، فإذا تساووا هلكوا

People will continue enjoying goodness as long as they uphold differences in ranks. Once they all become equals, they will be destroyed.

He also quotes a couplet of a poet:

لا يصلح الناس فوضى لا سراة لهم – ولا سراة إذا جهالهم سادوا

When people become equal in the sense that every person is their officer and chief, their condition will never be rectified. And if they appoint an ignorant person as their leader, then he is certainly non-existent.[1]

A person reaches high levels solely by following. This is the rational proof for the need and virtue of following. A poet says:

> Every person who submits before the order (of his senior) will soon become worthy of issuing orders himself.

Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* received the caliphate by virtue of his following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.* He did not bother about his life and wealth for Rasūlullāh's sake. The unbelievers used to tug at his beard but he bore their taunts patiently. He was a friend of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* from pre-Islamic times. It was by virtue of his following Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* ordered him to lead the people in salāh in his very life.

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[1] *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*, p. 438.

When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* departed from this world, the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* differed as to who should become the caliph. The Ansār expressed the desire to have someone from them. Thereafter a suggestion was made that there should be two caliphs; one from the Ansār and one from the Muhājirūn. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* quoted this Hadīth:

الأئمة من قريش[1]

The leaders are to be from the Quraysh.

The Ansār fell silent. Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* stood up and said: "Who can ever be a leader of a group in which there is Abū Bakr?" He then addressed Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*: "Give me your hand." Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* extended his hand and he pledged allegiance to him. All those who were present followed suite.

This is the result of following. Shaykh Saʿdī relates a story in his *Būstān*: I was going somewhere on one occasion when I saw a saint approaching on a lion. I was astonished at this sight, so he asked me: "Why are you astonished?"

> If you do not turn away from the orders of
> Allāh *taʿālā* no one will refuse to obey you.

The rights of dhimmīs[2]

Everything is written in the books but no one is interested in reading them. The rules and regulations

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ١٩، ص ٣١٨، حديث ١٢٣٠٧.

[2] Non Muslims living in an Islamic state.

are explained for the Muslims. The rights of dhimmīs are explained. The ʿulamāʾ have written everything in detail but you people have moved away from the path of the Sharīʿat. You neither accept the Traditions nor do you accept the intellect. You have the Qur'ān and Hadīth with you but you understand nothing. Hadrat Maulānā Habīb ar-Rahmān ʿUthmānī Sāhib *rahimahullāh* who had been a principal of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband writes in *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*:

> The same is the condition of non-Muslims living in a Muslim country under their [Muslims'] protection and covenant. It is a major sin to kill them. Let alone killing them, it is even forbidden to backbite them. It is not permissible to commit any wrong against them. In fact, the books of jurisprudence say that it is more serious to wrong a dhimmī. There can be differences in the severity or lightness of a sin on the basis of Islam and kufr, but there can be no doubt about a major sin.[1]

Backbiting a believer

I am not relating these things just like that, but after thinking and pondering over them. Just imagine! It is harām to backbite a dhimmī yet we are fully occupied in backbiting and complaining about our own Muslim brothers. This is more so if a person is an ʿālim or a righteous person. We then feel it necessary to backbite him and "embellish" our gatherings and assemblies by backbiting them. I observed this wherever I went. In fact, it seems as though people consider backbiting the ʿulamāʾ to be an act of worship. From their

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[1] *Ishāʿat-e-Islam*, p. 422.

statements it feels that they have a lot of concern and pain for Islam. They do not perform salāh themselves but they are always looking for opportunities to "rectify" those who are regular with their salāh. The seriousness of hurting the heart of a Muslim no longer remains. Hadrat ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *rahimahullāh* explains the despicability of offending or hurting a believer – either verbally or through one's actions. He then quotes the following Hadīth of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*:

عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم أنه قال: أذية المؤمن أعظم عند الله من نقض الكعبة والبيت المعمور خمس عشرة مرة.

Rasūlullāh sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam said: Hurting a believer is worse in the sight of Allāh taʿālā than destroying the Kaʿbah and the Bayt al-Maʿmūr[1] *fifteen times.*

اسمع ويلكم يا من لم يزل يؤذي فقراء الله تعالى عز وجل وهم المؤمنون الصالحون له العارفون به المتوكلون عليه.

Listen! May you be destroyed! You who constantly harms the poor servants of Allāh taʿālā. They are the believers who are righteous to Him, have fully recognized Him, and place their trust in Him.

Did you hear! There were people like this in those times as well, and this has been the norm – that some people are constantly looking for opportunities and occasions to criticize and harm the servants of Allāh *taʿālā*. Such people never succeeded. No one ever reached Allāh *taʿālā* through backbiting and

[1] The Kaʿbah of the angels in the heavens.

complaining about fellow Muslims. Abstain from this for in it lies your success. It is because of these immoralities and evil characteristics that the land has become constricted upon us. Follow Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and abstain from mutual differences. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَأَطِيْعُوا اللّٰهَ وَرَسُوْلَهُ وَلَا تَنَازَعُوْا فَتَفْشَلُوْا وَتَذْهَبَ رِيْحُكُمْ

Obey the order of Allāh and of His Messenger and do not dispute with each other or else you will lose courage and your strength will depart.[1]

Despite this, people do not pay heed. One Maulwī Sāhib lost in the elections. The one in the opposing party who was also a Muslim announced: "The bearded-fellow lost." I ask you, is it permissible to say such a thing? The beard is a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. Does this announcement not entail mockery at the Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*? Will the honour and dignity of Muslims be protected by such statements? I am asking you people for a fatwā – what is the ruling of the Sharīʿat for such a statement? It is most sad at how low the Muslims have stooped.

This is synonymous to personal suicide. In fact, it is suicide of a nation. People can never succeed if they say such things. They want to learn politics and Dīn from the newspapers, but they are not prepared to study the life of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. A poet says:

> O you! For how long are you going to continue studying the wisdom of the

[1] Sūrah al-Anfāl, 8: 46.

> Greeks? At least devote some time to studying the wisdom of the believers, and see how much you will learn.

Nowadays every person says: “This is my view and my opinion.” I say, a view and an opinion comes from observing and thinking. You do not even have the capability of observing and thinking, so how did you get those views and opinions!? If there was any view and opinion which was worth its salt, would he have been in such a terrible condition? Listen! When any work is done under a correct and genuine view, it is rectitude. If not, it is corruption. Allāh *taʿālā* put a seal to this by the words:

قُلْ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّوْنَ اللّٰهَ فَاتَّبِعُوْنِيْ

Say: If you love Allāh then follow me.[1]

If you follow correctly, you will succeed.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اَرِنَا الْحَقَّ حَقًّا وَّارْزُقْنَا اتِّبَاعَهُ، وَاَرِنَا الْبَاطِلَ بَاطِلًا وَّارْزُقْنَا اجْتِنَابَهُ

O Allāh! Enable us to identify the truth and inspire us to follow it. Enable us to see falsehood as falsehood and inspire us to abstain from it.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 31.

THE QUALITIES OF HUMANS AND MUSLIMS

I am now going to give you a definition of man. I will read the verses of the Qur'ān to you in which Allāh *taʿālā* defines man. In other words, He makes mention of some of man's qualities. Whose definition can be greater than Allāh's?

Allāh *taʿālā* provides us with a detailed description of man. He then gives a separate description of believers, and a separate one of unbelievers. In other words, He lists the qualities of believers and unbelievers so that people can recognize the qualities of believers and embellish themselves with them, and recognize the qualities of unbelievers and abstain from them. Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah al-Maʿārij:

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ خُلِقَ هَلُوْعًا. إِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ جَزُوْعًا. وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الْخَيْرُ مَنُوْعًا. إِلَّا
الْمُصَلِّيْنَ. الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَاتِهِمْ دَائِمُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ فِيْٓ أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ مَّعْلُوْمٌ.
لِلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُوْمِ. وَالَّذِيْنَ يُصَدِّقُوْنَ بِيَوْمِ الدِّيْنِ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ مِنْ عَذَابِ
رَبِّهِمْ مُّشْفِقُوْنَ. إِنَّ عَذَابَ رَبِّهِمْ غَيْرُ مَأْمُوْنٍ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ
حَافِظُوْنَ. إِلَّا عَلٰى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ.
فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَاءَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعَادُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِأَمَانَاتِهِمْ
وَعَهْدِهِمْ رَاعُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ بِشَهَادَاتِهِمْ قَائِمُوْنَ. وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى
صَلَاتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ. أُولٰئِكَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ مُّكْرَمُوْنَ.

Surely man is created with a restless disposition. When misfortune befalls him, he is impatient. When good fortune comes to him, he is niggardly. Except those who are observant of salāh, who remain constant in their salāh. And those in whose wealth there is a due

portion for the beggar and the dispossessed. And those who truly believe in the day of Judgement. And those who fear the punishment of their Lord. Surely none should feel secure from the punishment of his Lord. And those who guard their private parts. Except from their spouses and their slave-girls, for then, they are free of all blame. But whoever seeks beyond that, it is they who are the transgressors. And those who are faithful to their trusts and promises. And those who stand firm in their testimonies. And those who are mindful of their s̲alāh. It is they who are in gardens, with full honour.[1]

The following is stated in *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī*:

الهلع سرعة الجزع عند مس المكروه وسرعة المنع عند مس الخير[2]

The word halaʿ means to be very quick in impatience and restlessness when a disagreeable situation is experienced, and to be quick in refusing people when a good situation is experienced.

This is how man is created. However, there are exceptions. They are explained further on in the verse.

After making the exception, Allāh *taʿālā* lists various qualities but the distinguishing quality and hallmark of a believer is that he is regular and punctual with his s̲alāh. A few other qualities are then listed. They are collectively referred to as "a believer".

What this means is that the evil trait mentioned in the beginning is not to be found in a perfect believer. The reason for this is that the crux of the qualities of a

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[1] Sūrah al-Maʿārij, 70: 19-35.

[2] روح المعاني، ج

perfect believer is that he changes his bad qualities with good ones. This is why the exception which is made in this verse is made as regards their qualities which are catalysts for being protected from the evil traits.

I said that the qualities are collectively referred to as "a believer". This is because Allāh *taʿālā* describes the believers with the very same qualities in another place in the Qur'ān:

قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُوْنَ

Successful indeed are the believers.

الَّذِيْنَ هُمْ فِيْ صَلَاتِهِمْ خٰشِعُوْنَ

Who are humble in their s̲alāh.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَنِ اللَّغْوِ مُعْرِضُوْنَ

Who do not pay heed to futile talk.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِلزَّكٰوةِ فٰعِلُوْنَ

Who continually pay the zakāh.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِفُرُوْجِهِمْ حٰفِظُوْنَ

Who guard their private parts.

إِلاَّ عَلٰى أَزْوَاجِهِمْ أَوْ مَا مَلَكَتْ أَيْمَانُهُمْ فَإِنَّهُمْ غَيْرُ مَلُوْمِيْنَ

Except from their wives or the slave girls that they posses. For then, they are free from blame.

فَمَنِ ابْتَغٰى وَرَآءَ ذٰلِكَ فَأُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْعٰدُوْنَ

Then whoever seeks beyond that, it is they who are the transgressors.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ لِأَمٰنٰتِهِمْ وَعَهْدِهِمْ رٰعُوْنَ

[Successful also are those] who are observant of their trusts and pledges.

وَالَّذِيْنَ هُمْ عَلٰى صَلَوٰتِهِمْ يُحَافِظُوْنَ

Those who are watchful of their s̲alāh.

أُولٰئِكَ هُمُ الْوٰرِثُوْنَ

It is they who are the inheritors.

الَّذِيْنَ يَرِثُوْنَ الْفِرْدَوْسَ ط هُمْ فِيْهَا خٰلِدُوْنَ

Who shall inherit the Paradise of Cool Shade. They shall abide therein forever.[1]

This is a clarification of the group which is excluded – which is the exception. Allāh *taʿālā* gives another description of man and excludes the perfect believers from it – they are the righteous and patient believers.

وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ مِنَّا رَحْمَةً ثُمَّ نَزَعْنٰهَا مِنْهُ إِنَّهُ لَيَئُوْسٌ كَفُوْرٌ. وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنٰهُ نَعْمَآءَ بَعْدَ ضَرَّآءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ ذَهَبَ السَّيِّاٰتُ عَنِّيْ، إِنَّهُ لَفَرِحٌ فَخُوْرٌ. إِلَّا الَّذِيْنَ صَبَرُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ، أُولٰئِكَ لَهُمْ مَّغْفِرَةٌ وَّأَجْرٌ كَبِيْرٌ.

If We were to give man a taste of mercy from Us, and then take it away from him – he becomes despondent, ungrateful. If We give him a taste of comfort after hardship had befallen him, he will surely exclaim:

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 1-11.

"Evils have departed from me." He is elated, boastful. Except those who are patient and do good deeds. For them is forgiveness and a great reward.[1]

In the above verse the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the word "mercy" as "bounty". He takes it to mean good health, affluence, etc. What this means is that if We [Allāh *taʿālā*] bless him with good health, wealth, etc. and he gets a taste of them, and We then take them away from him, he becomes totally despondent and begins to show ungratefulness for these favours. And if We allow him to taste some favour after hardship had befallen him, he will say: "All my pains and worries have left me." He becomes boastful and falls into pride. He then display his arrogance to others. Once he becomes engrossed in these bounties he becomes totally negligent in the fulfilment of his duties.

In this verse also Allāh *taʿālā* describes man as despondent and ungrateful; and then as elated and boastful. Thereafter Allāh *taʿālā* excludes certain people. They are the ones who are resolute and righteous.

The essence of the above is that when man is put through trials and tribulations, then one quality in him is that he is very quick in becoming fearless and despondent. In other words, when a harmful episode passes, he forgets about its occurrence. This is why he becomes fearless and dauntless. This becomes the catalyst for his statement: "Evils have departed from me." In other words, he says: "Whatever was meant to happen has happened. Now this evil will never return to me." (This statement is possible in respect to all the

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[1] Sūrah Hūd, 11: 9-11.

unbelievers through their actions, and others even say it verbally). Similarly, when a favourable episode passes, he feels that it is not possible for such good to return. This is the reason behind his despondency.

Here too Allāh *taʿālā* excludes certain people and certain human qualities, but in a different way. He says: "Except those who are patient and do good deeds." Previously He said: "Except those who believe and do good deeds." This is because good deeds include all those which are mentioned in the verses: "Except those who are observant of s̲alāh…Those who are watchful of their s̲alāh."

In the above verses Allāh *taʿālā* describes few qualities of man, and then excludes the perfect believers from them. The exclusion is either conveyed by the words: "Except those who are observant of s̲alāh" or the words "Except those who are patient and do good deeds."

The words may be different but the meaning of both is one. Allāh *taʿālā* is excluding the perfect believers from the previously mentioned qualities. Allāh *taʿālā* explains these points to us in order to rectify their character. He wants to direct their attention to the fact that it is possible for man to naturally turn his attention in that direction, but if he chooses īmān and good deeds; and fulfils both with their prerequisites, then Allāh *taʿālā* has placed a special effect in these actions whereby even his natural inclinations can be changed. In other words, his evil powers can be changed into good ones. We learn from this that the divine manner of rectifying character are these very same good deeds of the Sharīʿat. If a person adheres strictly to them, he can even change his own inclinations.

By virtue of his īmān and good deeds, a perfect believer saves himself from the wickedness of these evils. On the other hand, because an unbeliever does not choose īmān and good deeds, then when these human demands overwhelm him, he does and says as he is dictated. Allāh *taʿālā* depicts this scene of man as follows:

لَا يَسْأَمُ الْإِنْسَانُ مِنْ دُعَاءِ الْخَيْرِ وَإِنْ مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَيَئُوْسٌ قَنُوْطٌ. وَلَئِنْ أَذَقْنَاهُ رَحْمَةً مِنَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ ضَرَّاءَ مَسَّتْهُ لَيَقُوْلَنَّ هٰذَا لِيْ وَمَا أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَائِمَةً وَّلَئِنْ رُجِعْتُ إِلٰى رَبِّيْ إِنَّ لِيْ عِنْدَهُ لَلْحُسْنٰى. فَلَنُنَبِّئَنَّ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا بِمَا عَمِلُوْا وَلَنُذِيقَنَّهُمْ مِنْ عَذَابٍ غَلِيظٍ. وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَاٰى بِجَانِبِهِ وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَذُوْ دُعَاءٍ عَرِيْضٍ.

Man does not tire in asking for good. But if any adversity afflicts him, he becomes despondent, loses all hope. Were We to make him taste some of Our mercy after some adversity had afflicted him, he will say: 'This is worthy of me. And I do not think that Resurrection is to come. Even if I am returned to my Lord, for me is the supreme good by Him." We will certainly inform the unbelievers of what they did. And We will make them taste a severe punishment. When We shower Our bounties on man, he evades and turns aside. And when misery afflicts him, he engages in prolonged supplication.[1]

The following is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī*:

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[1] Sūrah Hā Mīm as-Sajdah, 41: 49-51.

هذا لي أي حقي استحقه لما لي من الفضل والعمل لا تفضل من الله تعالى عز وجل، أو هو لي دائما لا يزول.[١]

When he receives a bounty he says: "This is after all my right. I am eligible for it by virtue of my excellence, knowledge and practice. It is not a favour and gift from Allāh." Alternatively he says: "This goodness is for me and will remain forever. It will never decline."

He says further: "I do not believe in the coming of the Resurrection. Even if I am conveyed to my Lord, I will receive the best." Allāh *taʿālā* says: "We will inform the rejecters of all their sayings and doings, and We will make them taste a severe punishment. When We confer bounties to man, he turns away. When misery afflicts him, he engages in lengthy supplications. The same attitude of turning to Allāh *taʿālā* at the time of adversity and disregarding Him at the time of prosperity is conveyed as follows:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَآئِمًا ۚ فَلَمَّا كَشَفْنَا عَنْهُ ضُرَّهُ مَرَّ كَأَنْ لَّمْ يَدْعُنَآ إِلٰى ضُرٍّ مَّسَّهُ ۚ كَذٰلِكَ زُيِّنَ لِلْمُسْرِفِيْنَ مَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ.

When affliction befalls man, he calls out to Us, [while] lying on his side, sitting or standing. But once We remove from him his affliction, he goes on as though he had never called out to Us upon the affliction which befell him. In this way, it seems pleasing to the fearless persons whatever they are doing.[2]

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[1] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٥، ص ٤.

[2] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 12.

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes in his commentary to the above verse:

> The theme of this verse is to be found in a few other verses of the Qur'ān but expressed differently. The gist of all is that when man experiences a good condition, then the following qualities are found in him: turning away, forgetting, abandoning duʿā', rejoicing and exulting. All these qualities can be found collectively in a person. When he experiences a bad condition, these qualities are found in him: despair, ingratitude and duʿā'.
>
> Despair and ingratitude can be found collectively in a person. However, duʿā' and despair seem to be unlikely. After all, duʿā' is made in hope. We could say that the person is making duʿā' with his tongue while his heart is filled with despair. Or, he engages in a lot of duʿā' in the beginning but then becomes despondent and gives it up. A third answer could be that the duʿā' which the person is making is not as an entreaty to Allāh *taʿālā*. Rather, it is like the noise and clamour made by materialists when they experience the slightest unfavourable condition. For example, they say: "O Allāh! What can I do?" "O Allāh! What is going to happen now?"[1]

To sum up, Allāh *taʿālā* listed certain human qualities and excluded the believers from them. These qualities

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[1] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, pārā 11.

are mentioned in several places in the Qur’ān, but exceptions are not made in each and every one of these places. Based on the principle of:

القرآن يفسر بعضه بعضا

The Qur’ān explains itself.

We can say that the unbelievers are intended and addressed wherever these human qualities are mentioned, while Allāh *taʿālā* safeguarded the believers from these evils by virtue of their īmān and good actions.

Believers are patient at the time of adversity and grateful for Allāh’s favours and bounties. When they are faced with adversity they are neither despondent, ungrateful nor pessimistic. And when they experience prosperity, they are neither proud, haughty nor arrogant. Instead, they are happy with the Master’s decree under every situation. Just as they turn to Allāh *taʿālā* and beseech Him at times of difficulty and adversity, they are grateful to Him at times of wellness and bounties. They are appreciative of Allāh’s grace.

In his explanation to the verse:

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ الضُّرُّ دَعَانَا لِجَنْبِهِ أَوْ قَاعِدًا أَوْ قَآئِمًا

When affliction befalls man, he calls out to Us, [while] lying on his side, sitting or standing.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes:

[1] Sūrah Yūnus, 10: 12.

وفي الآية ذم لمن يترك الدعاء في الرخاء ويهرع إليه في الشدة، والائق بحال الكامل التضرع إلى مولاه في السراء والضراء، فإن ذلك أرجى للإجابة، ففي الحديث تعرف إلى الله في الرخاء يعرفك في الشدة. وأخرج أبو الشيخ عن أبي الدرداء رضي الله عنه قال: أدع الله تعالى يوم سرائك يستجب لك يوم ضرائك، وفي حديث للترمذي عن أبي هريرة رضي الله عنه ورواه الحاكم عن سفيان وقال صحيح الإسناد من سره أن يستجيب الله تعالى له عند الشدائد والكروب فليكثر الدعاء في الرخاء.[1]

The present verse castigates those who abandon duʿā’ at the time of prosperity and hasten to it at the time of adversity. Whereas a perfect human ought to submit before his Master during prosperity and adversity, for then his duʿā’ is more likely to be answered. A H̲adīth states: "Present yourself before Allāh during prosperity and He will acknowledge you during adversity." Abū ad-Dardā’ rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu said: "Pray to Allāh and beseech Him during your days of prosperity and He will accept your supplications during your days of adversity." Abū Hurayrah rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu narrates: "Whoever would like Allāh taʿālā to accept his supplications during times of hardship and calamities must engage in abundant supplications during times of prosperity."

We learn from this that a believer is never heedless. The enjoyment and comfort of this world cannot cause him to forget Allāh *taʿālā*. In fact, humaneness and nobility demand that man recognizes his benefactor

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[1] روح المعاني، جزء ١١، ص ٨٠.

and appreciates his favours. The intelligentsia say that the person who is devoid of this quality is not a human.

Bahādur Shāh Z̲afar Dehlawī said:

> No matter how intelligent and sharp-witted a person may be, Z̲afar will not consider him to be a human if he does not remember Allāh *taʿālā* in prosperity and fear Him in adversity.

This shows that man does forget Allāh *taʿālā* in prosperity except the one who is a genuine slave. He recognizes his master and fulfils his rights. If he is not a genuine slave, it will be very easy for the effects of this worldly life to make him negligent.

The genuine and sincere servants of Allāh *taʿālā* obliterated themselves completely and melted their pleasures for the pleasure of Allāh *taʿālā*. We observe the true servants in this world regarding their own opinions and likes to be nothing before the opinions and likes of their master. Consequently, they enjoy closeness and proximity to their master.

A perfect believer is submissive under every condition

I will relate two stories which are in line with this theme:

There was a master who was slicing cucumbers and feeding his slave. While he was doing this, the thought crossed his mind to taste the cucumber. The moment he placed a slice on his tongue, he spat it out and said: "How are you eating such a bitter cucumber without even complaining!?"

The slave replied: "Sir! I was also finding it bitter but I thought to myself that I had always been receiving

sweet things from this hand [of yours]. If I were to complain about something bitter on this one occasion it will negate my love for you.” The master was most pleased by this answer and freed him because of it.

Did you see the reply of the slave? Look at your relationship with Allāh *taʿālā*. Look at the countless favours which He is showering you with! Yet, if people experience just one small incident which is against their likes, they complain and whine. This is a defective trait. The author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* states that a perfect believer is one who submits before Allāh *taʿālā* in every situation – in comfort and discomfort, prosperity and adversity, pain and joy.

Now listen to the second story.

While explaining the meaning of *ʿubūdīyyat* (servitude), the author of *Tarsīʿ* writes:

هي عبارة عن امتثال الأوامر واجتناب النواهي امتثالا لأمر الله تعالى لا لعلة، وأن تكون راضيا عن الله تعالى على كل حال وليس لك معه اختيار.

It means that you must carry out Allāh’s orders and abstain from His prohibitions solely out of believing this to be His order and not for any other motive. And that you be pleased with Allāh taʿālā in every situation to the extent that you have no choice before Him.

He then writes that it is related in *Fath̲ ar-Rabbānī* that a person bought a slave and asked him: “What kind of clothes would you like to wear?” He replied: “Whatever the master gives me to wear.” The master asked: “Okay, what type of work do you want to do?” He replied: “Whatever the master orders.” The master asked: “In which part of the house do you want to

live?” He replied: “Wherever you order me.” On hearing this, the master said: “You are a strange person, you have no opinion about anything!?”

The slave said: “O my master! Can a slave ever have any opinion of his own in the presence of his master?” When the master heard this, he said: “O I wish I was before my own master [Allāh *taʿālā*] as you are before me. You have made me see the reality and you have become my benefactor. I therefore free you for Allāh’s sake. I request you to live here so that I can be of service to you.”

Glory to Allāh! This is a unique incident to turn an ordinary human into an ʿārif, and a heedless person into a dhākir. Relationships of this nature occur between worldly masters and slaves. From this you can gauge the relationship which the Ahlullāh have with Allāh *taʿālā*. These relationships are the reserve of the true believers. As for unbelievers, because they do not even believe in Allāh *taʿālā* and the Hereafter, they make this world their sole objective and confine their focus to it. They neither believe in the Hereafter nor do they believe in any rewards in the Hereafter. This is why they have the evil qualities which were mentioned in the previously-quoted verses. Now listen to one more verse:

فَاَمَّا الْاِنْسَانُ اِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ رَبُّهُ فَاَكْرَمَهُ وَنَعَّمَهُ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّيْٓ اَكْرَمَنِ، وَاَمَّا اِذَا مَا ابْتَلَاهُ فَقَدَرَ عَلَيْهِ رِزْقَهُ فَيَقُوْلُ رَبِّيْٓ اَهَانَنِ.

As for man, when his Lord tests him by giving him honour and bounties, he says: “My Lord has honoured

me." But when He tests him by restricting his sustenance, he says: "My Lord has disgraced me."[1]

Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī *rahimahullāh* explains the above as follows:

> It means that an unbeliever considers the world to be his sole objective. He believes his prosperous condition to be a proof of acceptance in Allāh's sight and feels that he is eligible for it. He believes that poverty is a proof of rejection and he is not eligible. This entails two prohibitions. One is to consider the world to be the sole objective. This results in rejection of the Hereafter. The second prohibition is the claim to eligibility which results in pride over bounties, ingratitude, complaining at the time of calamities, and abandoning patience. All these actions make one eligible for punishment.[2]

I quoted a few verses to you wherein Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to man in general and describes the qualities of an unbeliever. In some of these verses Allāh *taʿālā* excludes the believers through words and in other verses through meanings. A large section of the Qur'ān contains conditions and incidents related to those who are sincerely obedient and those who are disobedient and hypocrites. In some places Allāh *taʿālā* mentions their qualities alone while in other places He sheds light on the qualities of both groups in the midst of a story. Sūrah al-Kahf contains one

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[1] Sūrah al-Fajr, 89: 15-16.

[2] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, vol. 12, p. 96.

such story. It is a most unique story which we are quoting to you.

The instability of this world and stability of the Hereafter

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاضْرِبْ لَهُمْ مَثَلًا رَّجُلَيْنِ

Set forth for them the parable of two men.[1]

In other words, in order to demonstrate to them the instability of this world and the permanence of the Hereafter, relate to them the condition of two men. Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* writes that through a story, Allāh *taʿālā* demonstrates the denigration of wealth and the superiority of īmān and good deeds, and shows that the basis for the unbelievers' demanding Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* to remove the believers when they come to meet him is their pride and exultance over worldly wealth and possessions. This is also the basis for the scorn and disregard which they show towards the poor Muslims.

While this story demonstrates the error of the unbelievers, it provides comfort and solace to the believers in the sense that they must not grieve over poverty and be grateful over acquiring the treasures of the Hereafter.[2]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* also explains this verse along similar lines. He writes:

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 32.

[2] *Bayān al-Qur'ān*, pārā 15.

واضرب لهم أي للمؤمنين الذين يدعون ربهم بالغداة والعشي والكفرة الذين طلبوا طردهم.

In other words, relate the story of these two men to the believers who call on their Lord in the morning and evening and to the unbelievers who are asking for the removal of the believers.

The author of *Rūẖ al-Maʿānī* says that the parable is for both groups – the believers and the unbelievers, but not in the sense that this is the reward for believers in the Hereafter and this is the punishment for the unbelievers. Rather, in the sense that although the unbelievers enjoy the bounties of Allāh *taʿālā*, they are rebels against Him. On the other hand, although the believers endure hardships, they are obedient to Allāh *taʿālā* – as was the case with the two persons mentioned in this story. One of them received bounties but was disobedient, while the other was in poverty but was obedient to Allāh *taʿālā*.[1]

There are different opinions with regard to who the two men were. H̱aḏrat ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿAbbās *raḏiyallāhu ʿanhu* is of the view that they were two brothers from the Banī Isrā'īl. One whose name was Qarṯūs or Qaṯfar was an unbeliever. The other whose name was Yahūdhā or Yamīlīkhā was a believer. Another view is that the two were princes from the Banī Isrā'īl. One of them spent his wealth in Allāh's cause while the other disbelieved and became immersed in worldly pleasures.

Yet another view is that the two were ironmongers. They either earned a lot of wealth or inherited it from

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[1] *Rūẖ al-Maʿānī*, vol. 15, p. 373.

their father. Each one received 4 000 of the currency of that time. The unbeliever bought a piece of land for 1 000. The believer said: "O Allāh! I am buying a piece of land in Paradise for 1 000. He then gave this amount in charity." The unbeliever then constructed a house for 1 000. The believer said: "O Allāh! I request a fully constructed house in Paradise." Saying this, he gave 1 000 in charity. The unbeliever then married a woman in lieu for 1 000. The believer said: "O Allāh! I am setting aside 1 000 as dowry for a damsel of Paradise." He then gave the third 1 000 in charity. His brother spent the last 1 000 in decorating his house and employing servants and maids. The believer said: "O Allāh! I am purchasing the eternal youth of Paradise for 1 000." And he gave the fourth 1 000 in charity.

Later on, the believer needed some financial assistance so he sat on the path which his brother normally takes. The brother approached with much pomp and ceremony. The believing brother was about to say something, and the unbeliever realized what it was, so he scolded and reprimanded him; and castigated him for spending all his wealth in Allāh's cause. The believer responded to his bad character with noble character, and his atheistic statements with statements of īmān. Allāh *taʿālā* relates their statements in these verses, the purpose of which is for both groups (believers and unbelievers) to take a lesson and an admonition.

Believers must have full faith and conviction in Allāh's help and power. They must understand that when a person helps Allāh's Dīn against the unbelievers, he will succeed in both worlds. On the other hand, the unbeliever must realize that he will have to suffer evil

consequences for his unbelief in this world – before he can suffer for it in the Hereafter.

The purpose of this entire discussion is for people to become desirous of īmān, good deeds, serving the Dīn and relying on Allāh *taʿālā*; and they must fear unbelief, disobedience, pride, haughtiness and transgression on account wealth.

The story of the two brothers reads as follows:

جَعَلْنَا لِأَحَدِهِمَا جَنَّتَيْنِ مِنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَّحَفَفْنٰهُمَا بِنَخْلٍ وَّجَعَلْنَا بَيْنَهُمَا زَرْعًا

We made for one of them two orchards of vines, and surrounded them with date-palms, and placed between them a cornfield.[1]

كِلْتَا الْجَنَّتَيْنِ اٰتَتْ أُكُلَهَا وَلَمْ تَظْلِمْ مِّنْهُ شَيْئًا ۙ وَّفَجَّرْنَا خِلٰلَهُمَا نَهَرًا. وَّكَانَ لَهُ ثَمَرٌ ۚ فَقَالَ لِصَاحِبِهِ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَنَا أَكْثَرُ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّأَعَزُّ نَفَرًا. وَدَخَلَ جَنَّتَهُ وَهُوَ ظَالِمٌ لِّنَفْسِهِ ۚ قَالَ مَآ أَظُنُّ أَنْ تَبِيْدَ هٰذِهِ أَبَدًا. وَّمَآ أَظُنُّ السَّاعَةَ قَآئِمَةً ۙ وَّلَئِنْ رُّدِدْتُّ إِلٰى رَبِّيْ لَأَجِدَنَّ خَيْرًا مِّنْهَا مُنْقَلَبًا.

Each of the two orchards yields its produce and does not decrease anything from it. We caused a river to flow between the two [orchards]. He received the fruit. So he said to his brother when he was conversing with him: "I have more wealth than you and [more] people of respect." He entered his orchard having wronged himself. He said: "I don't think that this orchard will ever be destroyed. And I do not think that Resurrection

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 32.

will take place. If I am ever conveyed to my Lord, I will find something better than this upon reaching there."[1]

The error of the unbeliever

In his intoxication with wealth, the unbeliever made four claims. One is that an unbeliever is not blameworthy. He tried to prove this with the words:

> I have more wealth than you and [more] people of respect.

The second is that he rejected tauhīd. The following statement makes reference to this:

> I don't think that this orchard will ever be destroyed.

He said to his brother: I do not understand how the Creator of the universe and His power which you believe in can render all these natural means to nothing. How is it possible for this orchard which has all the means for its existence - it has a river, labourers, I have the wealth to spend on it, and the means to safeguard the wealth – ever be destroyed!?

His third claim is his rejection of the Resurrection. He clearly said:

> And I do not think that Resurrection will take place.

His fourth claim is that he considered himself to be honourable and distinguished in Allāh's sight. He said:

> If I am ever conveyed to my Lord, I will find something better than this upon reaching there.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 33-36.

The fourth claim is not a separate claim on its own but an offshoot of his first claim.

His believing brother responded to each of his claims. He defended the truth and tried to cleanse his brother's mind and to prompt him towards belief in Allāh *taʿālā* and the Resurrection. However, when inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* is not with a person, he loses his intelligence and this world becomes a tribulation for him. The believer explained to him and removed his misunderstandings but he refused to accept. Consequently his destruction was bound to come.

The believer's reply

Allāh *taʿālā* quotes the believer's reply as follows:

قَالَ لَهُ صَاحِبُهُ وَهُوَ يُحَاوِرُهُ أَكَفَرْتَ بِالَّذِيْ خَلَقَكَ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ مِنْ نُّطْفَةٍ ثُمَّ سَوّٰكَ رَجُلاً. لٰكِنَّاْ هُوَ اللهُ رَبِّيْ وَلَآ أُشْرِكُ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا. وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللهِ ۚ إِنْ تَرَنِ أَنَا أَقَلَّ مِنْكَ مَالًا وَّوَلَدًا. فَعَسٰى رَبِّيْ أَنْ يُّؤْتِيَنِ خَيْرًا مِّنْ جَنَّتِكَ وَيُرْسِلَ عَلَيْهَا حُسْبَانًا مِّنَ السَّمَآءِ فَتُصْبِحَ صَعِيْدًا زَلَقًا. أَوْ يُصْبِحَ مَآؤُهَا غَوْرًا فَلَنْ تَسْتَطِيْعَ لَهُ طَلَبًا.

His friend said to him while conversing with him: "Do you reject the One who created you from soil, then from a drop of sperm, then fashioned you into a man? I still maintain that He is Allāh, my Lord and I associate no one with my Lord. When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: 'Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh.' If you see me less than you in wealth and offspring, it may well be that my Lord will give me an orchard better than yours and send upon your orchard a whirlwind from the sky reducing it to a barren field the next morning.

Or that its water dries up the next morning and you are unable to seek it."[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes:

والمعنى إن ترني أفقر منك فأنا أتوقع من صنيع الله تعالى أن يقلب ما بي وما بك من الفقر والغنى فيرزقني لإيماني جنة خيرا من جنتك ويسلبك بكفرك نعمته ويخرب جنتك.[2]

If you see me less than you as regards wealth and children, then I have full hopes in Allāh's grace that He will change my poverty into affluence, and your affluence into poverty. He will thus give me an orchard better than yours by virtue of my īmān and take away His bounties from you and destroy your orchard because of your unbelief.

The gist of the above is that the reason for your misunderstanding is the wealth and affluence which you have and I do not have. Your reasoning is incorrect because the opposite could happen. Even if it does not happen, there will certainly come a time when it will be destroyed or come to an end. On the other hand, the bounties of the Hereafter will not come to an end. Consideration of the Hereafter is taken and not of this world.

وَأُحِيْطَ بِثَمَرِهِ فَأَصْبَحَ يُقَلِّبُ كَفَّيْهِ عَلٰى مَآ أَنْفَقَ فِيْهَا وَهِيَ خَاوِيَةٌ عَلٰى عُرُوْشِهَا وَيَقُوْلُ يٰلَيْتَنِيْ لَمْ أُشْرِكْ بِرَبِّيْ أَحَدًا.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

[2] روح المعاني، ج ١٥، ص ٣٢.

All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord."[1]

Subsequent to this conversation, a major disaster befell the man's orchard. The nature of the disaster is not mentioned but it is gauged that it was extremely disastrous. It is not far-fetched to assume that it was a supernatural calamity. *Tafsīr Khāzin* states that it was a fire which descended from the skies, burnt the orchard and turned the water-source dry. "All his fruit was encompassed and he was left wringing his hands over the wealth that he had spent in it, and it was fallen on its trellises. He began saying: "How nice it would have been had I not ascribed any partner to my Lord." (This means: "I wish I did not disbelieve." This includes rejection of the Hereafter. We learn from this that the man realized that the calamity which struck him was in vengeance for his unbelief. This is why he expresses remorse, and says that had he not disbelieved, the calamity would not have afflicted him; and if it did, he would have received its recompense in the Hereafter. But now he has lost in this world and in the Hereafter. These statements may have been overheard by the believer. It does not necessarily mean that he became a believer after this because his remorse is over the loss which he suffered and not over the reprehensibility of unbelief.

وَلَمْ تَكُنْ لَّهُ فِئَةٌ يَّنْصُرُوْنَهُ مِنْ دُوْنِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا كَانَ مُنْتَصِرًا. هُنَالِكَ الْوَلَايَةُ لِلّٰهِ الْحَقِّ ط هُوَ خَيْرٌ ثَوَابًا وَّخَيْرٌ عُقْبًا.

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1 Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 42.

He had no group that could help him apart from Allāh nor could he take revenge himself. It is there that all authority belongs to Allāh, the True One. His reward alone is the best and His recompense alone is the best.[1]

Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* provides consolation to a believer by relating this story in the Qur'ān. The story also demonstrates the condition of the wealthy who become proud and arrogant over their wealth. The destiny of such a person is most certainly heavy in the Hereafter and he even suffers in this world. The unbeliever himself says that his suffering is on account of his polytheism and that if there is anything which could console him in this time of calamity and misery, then it is establishing a bond with Allāh *taʿālā*. Those who maintain a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* and place their trust in Him then, first of all, they do not suffer such miseries. Even if they do, then because of their love for Allāh *taʿālā* they consider anything which comes from Him to be good – even if it appears bad. Their patience and conviction in Allāh's promises make everything easy for them.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* explains the outcome and end-result of this story in *Masā'il as-Sulūk* as follows:

فيه تسلية الفقراء المتوكلين على الله تعالى وتنبيه الأغنياء المغرورين.[2]

This story contains a consolation for the poor who place their trust in Allāh taʿālā and serves as a warning to the arrogant wealthy people.

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 43-44.

[2] بيان القرآن، جزء ١٥.

Glory to Allāh! Hadrat *rahimahullāh* explained a most excellent result from this story. If the 'ulamā' of today relate these stories of the Qur'ān instead of their own stories in their lectures, it will have a great effect on the masses.

The virtue of Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh

I related this story to you so that you may learn the conditions and ranks of the righteous and the sinful. This story quotes a statement of the righteous believer which he made to his brother:

وَلَوْ لَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ

When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: "Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh."[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* quotes a few traditions under this verse. They are connected with actions. Since there is a dire need for actions today, I feel it essential to quote them here; perhaps they will prove beneficial to some people.

Imām Ahmad *rahimahullāh* narrates from Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* who said: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said to me: "Would you like to know about a treasure of Allāh *taʿālā* which lies under His Throne?" I replied: "Indeed, O Rasūlullāh!" He said: "Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh." (I say, it most probably refers to the entire sentence - Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh).

Hadrat 'Umar ibn Maymūn says: I asked Hadrat Abū Hurayrah *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*: "What did you say? Is it

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh or is it Lā Haula Wa Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh?” He replied: “It is what is mentioned in Sūrah al-Kahf.” That is, Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh.

Hadrat ʿAmr ibn Murrah says that the most superior supplication of a person is Māshā Allāh.

Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* narrates that Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: “When Allāh *taʿālā* confers a bounty to a person – whether with respect to his family, wealth or children – and he says: ‘Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh’ with regard to that bounty, then Allāh *taʿālā* repulses all calamities from that bounty until death.” After relating this Hadīth, Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* quoted the above-quoted verse.

Hadrat Anas *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* said: “If a person looks at any of his wealth and it pleases him, and he then says ‘Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh’, then no calamity will ever afflict that wealth.” He then read the same verse.

Abū Hātim narrates from Mutraf who said that when Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* used to enter a house, he used to say: Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh. Mutraf said: “I asked him the reason for saying this, so he said: ‘Did you not hear this verse of Allāh *taʿālā*:

وَلَوْلَآ إِذْ دَخَلْتَ جَنَّتَكَ قُلْتَ مَا شَآءَ اللّٰهُ ۙ لَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللّٰهِ

When you entered your orchard, why did you not say: “Whatever Allāh wills shall come to pass. There is no power except with Allāh.”[1]

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[1] Sūrah al-Kahf, 18: 37-41.

Ibn ʿArabī *rahimahullāh* says that Imām Mālik *rahimahullāh* used to present the above verse as a proof to say that it is desirable for anyone who enters a house to say "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh".

Imām Bayhaqī *rahimahullāh* relates in *Shuʿab al-Īmān* that whenever Hadrat ʿUrwah used to look at any of his belongings which pleased him or entered any of his orchards, he used to say "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh". He used to then present the above verse as proof for saying this.

It is gauged from certain traditions that if a person's eyes fall on anything which he likes – whether it belongs to him or to someone else – and he reads "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh" – then that thing will not be afflicted by the evil eye. Furthermore, it is desirable (mustahab) to make this supplication.[1]

It is related that when Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rahimahullāh* spoke on the virtues of "Māshā Allāh Lā Qūwwata Illā Billāh" in a lecture which he delivered in Mumbai, the people there practised on it a lot. They began reading it at the time of entering their houses, shops, factories, orchards, etc. In fact, some people had beautiful posters printed which were then displayed at the entrances of their homes and business places so that whenever their eyes fall on the supplication, they will be reminded to read it. May Allāh *taʿālā* inspire us to practise. Āmīn.

Allāh does not waste the rewards of the righteous

Merely frequenting a saint is not enough. The ʿulamā' have laid down prerequisites for this. The most important perquisite which they laid down is sincerity.

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[1] *Rūh al-Maʿānī*, vol. 15.

It is not possible for a person doing work for Allāh *taʿālā* and it going to waste. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

We do not waste the reward of the righteous.[1]

The above verse comes after what the minister of Egypt said to Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* when the latter requested to be entrusted with the treasury of Egypt. The minister said:

قَالَ اِنَّكَ الْيَوْمَ لَدَيْنَا مَكِيْنٌ اَمِيْنٌ

Surely, from today you have acquired a high rank with us, entrusted.[2]

The king then conferred all types of authority to Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. It was as though he had become the real king while the king was a king only in name. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ج يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ط نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ.

In this way We gave power to Yūsuf in the land; he could take possession therein wherever he liked. We convey Our mercy to whomever We will and We do not waste the reward of the righteous.[3]

In this verse Allāh *taʿālā* promises the believers that if they adopt īmān and piety, and become righteous,

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56.

[2] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 54.

[3] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56.

then in addition to what they will definitely receive in the Hereafter, He will reward them in this world for their good deeds.

In his commentary to the following verse, the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* quotes a statement of Hadrat Sufyān ibn ʿUyaynah *rahimahullāh*.

وَكَذٰلِكَ مَكَّنَّا لِيُوْسُفَ فِي الْاَرْضِ ۚ يَتَبَوَّاُ مِنْهَا حَيْثُ يَشَآءُ ۗ نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ. وَلَاَجْرُ الْاٰخِرَةِ خَيْرٌ لِّلَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَكَانُوْا يَتَّقُوْنَ.

In this way We gave power to Yūsuf in the land; he could take possession therein wherever he liked. We convey Our mercy to whomever We will and We do not waste the reward of the righteous. The reward of the Hereafter is better for those who believed and remained righteous.[1]

He said:

المؤمن يثاب على حسناته في الدنيا والآخرة، والفاجر يعجل له الخير في الدنيا، وما له في الآخرة من خلاق.[2]

A believer is rewarded for his good deeds in this world and in the Hereafter while a sinner is given his rewards in this world while he has no share of it at all in the Hereafter.

The words "We convey Our mercy" refer to worldly favours, bounties, wealth and riches. As for the words

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56-57.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ١٣.

"We do not waste the reward of the righteous", some commentators say that they refer to īmān and steadfastness on piety. They say that the reward which Allāh *taʿālā* has in store for Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* in the Hereafter is far more and much better than the sultanate and authority which he was given in this world. The story of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* as related in the Qur'ān is undoubtedly a very admonitory story. It revives a person's faith in Allāh *taʿālā* and increases his conviction in Allāh's promises.

The admonitory story of Hadrat Yūsuf

Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* conveyed Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* from the depths of a well in Kanʿān to the throne of Egypt! Then look at the end result of those who bore enmity towards him! It is a most admonitory story. If people were to read just this one story with understanding, their hearts will be filled with īmān. It is a long story. One part of it is related here. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَجَآءَ اِخْوَةُ يُوْسُفَ فَدَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ فَعَرَفَهُمْ وَهُمْ لَهُ مُنْكِرُوْنَ

The brothers of Yūsuf came and they went to him. He recognized them whereas they did not recognize him.[1]

After taking control of the treasury, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* began harvesting and collecting the grain. The region then experienced a drought after seven years. People from far off regions heard that the Egyptian government was distributing grain, so they began coming to Egypt in large numbers. Kanʿān was also experiencing a drought. The brothers of Hadrat

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 58.

Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* – excluding Binyāmīn – came to Egypt and proceeded to H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. The latter recognized them but they did not recognize him. It was his practice to give each person an amount of grain which he needed. When they received one camel's load for each person, they said that they have a brother whom their father kept behind because he had already lost one son. They requested H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* to give them one load for their brother. H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* replied that it is against the law. If they want his share, they will have to bring him.

وَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ قَالَ ائْتُوْنِيْ بِاَخٍ لَّكُمْ مِّنْ اَبِيْكُمْ ۚ اَلَا تَرَوْنَ اَنِّيْٓ اُوْفِي الْكَيْلَ وَاَنَا خَيْرُ الْمُنْزِلِيْنَ. فَاِنْ لَّمْ تَاْتُوْنِيْ بِهٖ فَلَا كَيْلَ لَكُمْ عِنْدِيْ وَلَا تَقْرَبُوْنِ. قَالُوْا سَنُرَاوِدُ عَنْهُ اَبَاهُ وَاِنَّا لَفٰعِلُوْنَ.

When he provided them with their provision, he said: "Bring to me a brother of yours who is from your father. Do you not see that I give the measure in full and that I entertain guests very well? If you do not bring him to me, there will be no measure for you, nor should you approach me." They said: "We will request this from his father, and we will certainly do this."[1]

When H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* prepared their load and they were about to leave, he said: "If you intend coming back after finishing this grain, you must bring your brother with. Don't you see that I give in full measure and that I am very hospitable to guests? If you come back without bringing him, I will conclude that you tried to deceive me and wanted to take extra

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 59-61.

grain. In such a case, you will not get anything from me."

They replied: "We will try our utmost to convince our father to send him. After that, it is left to our father to decide whether he should come or not."

وَقَالَ لِفِتْيٰنِهِ اجْعَلُوْا بِضَاعَتَهُمْ فِيْ رِحَالِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَعْرِفُوْنَهَآ اِذَا انْقَلَبُوْآ اِلٰى اَهْلِهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ.

He said to his servants: "Place their merchandise among their provisions so that they may recognize them when they go back to their family, and that they may return."[1]

When the brothers were on the verge of leaving, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* instructed his workers to conceal their merchandise with which they had bought the grain among their provisions so that when they reach home and find it, they will think of this favour and come back. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* wanted them to come back with their brother, this is why he resorted to several means to do this. The first thing he did was he promised them that if they bring him, they will receive a share for him. Then he warned them that if they do not bring him, they will not get anything – even for themselves. Thirdly, he returned whatever they had given as payment so that they would use it as proof of his kindness and generosity, and also because if they did not have sufficient money they would not come back. But now that it has been given to them, they will be able to come back with it.

When they returned to their father, they said: "O father! Arrangements for the grain have been made, so

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 62.

send our brother with us. In this way, we will obtain the grain and we will also protect our brother." H̲ad̲rat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* said: "Do you want me to entrust him to you as I had entrusted his brother, Yūsuf, to you? Allāh *taʿālā* is the best Protector and the most Merciful of those who show mercy. I have hope in Allāh *taʿālā* that He will keep Binyāmīn in His care and protection, show mercy to me, and not put me through two calamities at once."

The author of *Rūh̲ al-Maʿānī* writes that this statement of H̲ad̲rat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* demonstrates permission to take Binyāmīn because prudence and need necessitated his going. It also shows his reliance on Allāh *taʿālā*. It is mentioned in a H̲adīth that Allāh *taʿālā* said: "Bearing in mind that you placed your trust in Me, then I take an oath by My honour and power, that I will certainly return both brothers to you." Subsequently this is what happened and H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* also returned to his father.

When the brothers persisted and convinced their father, H̲ad̲rat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām* permitted them to take Binyāmīn on this second journey. They all presented themselves before H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. The incidents which followed are most admonitory and are sufficient to shake the heart. They affirm the words of Allāh *taʿālā* when He said:

إِنَّهُ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللهَ لاَ يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.[1]

Allāh *taʿālā* says:

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 90.

وَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلٰى يُوْسُفَ اٰوٰى اِلَيْهِ اَخَاهُ قَالَ اِنِّيْٓ اَنَا اَخُوْكَ فَلَا تَبْتَئِسْ بِمَا كَانُوْا يَعْمَلُوْنَ. فَلَمَّا جَهَّزَهُمْ بِجَهَازِهِمْ جَعَلَ السِّقَايَةَ فِيْ رَحْلِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اَذَّنَ مُؤَذِّنٌ اَيَّتُهَا الْعِيْرُ اِنَّكُمْ لَسٰرِقُوْنَ. قَالُوْا وَاَقْبَلُوْا عَلَيْهِمْ مَاذَا تَفْقِدُوْنَ قَالُوْا نَفْقِدُ صُوَاعَ الْمَلِكِ وَلِمَنْ جَآءَ بِهِ حِمْلُ بَعِيْرٍ وَّاَنَا بِهِ زَعِيْمٌ.

When they presented themselves before Yūsuf, he kept his brother [Binyāmīn] with him, [and] said: "I am your brother. Do not grieve, then, over whatever they did." Then when he prepared their provisions for them, he placed the drinking cup in his brother's provisions. An announcer then announced: "O you people of the caravan! You are certainly thieves." They said, turning towards them: "What is it that you have lost?" They said: "We cannot find the king's cup. Whoever produces it will receive one camel's load, and I guarantee that."[1]

قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا جِئْنَا لِنُفْسِدَ فِي الْاَرْضِ وَمَا كُنَّا سٰرِقِيْنَ. قَالُوْا فَمَا جَزَآؤُهٗ اِنْ كُنْتُمْ كٰذِبِيْنَ. قَالُوْا جَزَآؤُهٗ مَنْ وُّجِدَ فِيْ رَحْلِهِ فَهُوَ جَزَآؤُهٗ ط كَذٰلِكَ نَجْزِي الظّٰلِمِيْنَ. فَبَدَاَ بِاَوْعِيَتِهِمْ قَبْلَ وِعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ثُمَّ اسْتَخْرَجَهَا مِنْ وِّعَآءِ اَخِيْهِ ط كَذٰلِكَ كِدْنَا لِيُوْسُفَ ط مَا كَانَ لِيَاْخُذَ اَخَاهُ فِيْ دِيْنِ الْمَلِكِ اِلَّا اَنْ يَّشَآءَ اللّٰهُ ط نَرْفَعُ دَرَجٰتٍ مَّنْ نَّشَآءُ ط وَفَوْقَ كُلِّ ذِيْ عِلْمٍ عَلِيْمٌ.

They said: "By Allāh! You know that we did not come to make mischief in the land, and never were we thieves." They said: "Then what is the punishment thereof if you turn out to be liars?" They said: "The punishment

[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 69-72.

thereof is that the one in whose possessions it is found – he shall be the requital thereof. This is the punishment we mete out to the wrong doers." Yūsuf then began searching their bags before his brother's bag. Eventually he took out the cup from his brother's bag. This stratagem did We suggest to Yūsuf. He would never have been able to detain his brother under the king's law, except if Allāh wills. We raise the ranks of whom We will. Above every knowledgeable person, there is one more knowledgeable.[1]

The brothers tried to obtain their brother's release and went to the extent of saying: "He has a very old father, so take one of us in his place. We see that you are a very noble and kind-hearted person." Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* replied: "May Allāh *taʿālā* save me from apprehending someone other than the one with whom we found the cup. If I did such a thing, I will be most unjust. You are saying that I am kind-hearted, yet you are asking me to commit an injustice!? A benefactor has to be just, he cannot be oppressive."

The brothers lost hope and left. They came home and apologized to Hadrat Yaʿqūb *ʿalayhis salām*. He replied: "You have concocted this entire thing, I will exercise patience. I will not complain in the least. I have hope that Allāh *taʿālā* will return all of them to me. He is all-aware and all-wise." He also said: "O my sons! Go and search for Yūsuf and his brother. Do not lose hope in Allāh's mercy. It is only the unbelievers who have no hope in His mercy."

Acting under their father's order, the brothers left for Egypt once again to search for Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and his brother. They had left Binyāmīn in Egypt, so

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 73-76.

they thought to themselves that since they already know his whereabouts, they will start there and they will try and convince the king to release him. After that, they will search for Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*.

فَلَمَّا دَخَلُوْا عَلَيْهِ قَالُوْا يٰاَيُّهَا الْعَزِيْزُ مَسَّنَا وَاَهْلَنَا الضُّرُّ وَجِئْنَا بِبِضَاعَةٍ مُّزْجٰةٍ فَاَوْفِ لَنَا الْكَيْلَ وَتَصَدَّقْ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ. قَالَ هَلْ عَلِمْتُمْ مَّا فَعَلْتُمْ بِيُوْسُفَ وَاَخِيْهِ اِذْ اَنْتُمْ جٰهِلُوْنَ. قَالُوْآ ءَاِنَّكَ لَاَنْتَ يُوْسُفُ ؕ قَالَ اَنَا يُوْسُفُ وَهٰذَآ اَخِيْ ز قَدْ مَنَّ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا ؕ اِنَّهُ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ. قَالُوْا تَاللّٰهِ لَقَدْ اٰثَرَكَ اللّٰهُ عَلَيْنَا وَاِنْ كُنَّا لَخٰطِئِيْنَ. قَالَ لَا تَثْرِيْبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْيَوْمَ ؕ يَغْفِرُ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْ ز وَهُوَ اَرْحَمُ الرّٰحِمِيْنَ.

When they presented themselves before him, they said: "O ʿAzīz! Hardship has afflicted us and our family. We have brought merchandise of low value. Give us in full the measure, and be charitable to us. Surely Allāh rewards the charitable." He said: "Do you know what you had done to Yūsuf and his brother when you lacked understanding?" They said: "Are you really Yūsuf?" He replied: "I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has been kind to us. Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous." They said: "By Allāh! Allāh has indeed chosen you above us, and we were certainly in error." He said: "There is no reproach on you this day. May Allāh forgive you. He is the most merciful of those who show mercy."

The author of *Rūḫ al-Maʿānī* writes that the brothers of H̲ad̲rat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* were quite distressed on

this occasion. This is why they addressed him with utmost respect and expressed their poverty. They said:

> *O ʿAzīz! Hardship has afflicted us and our family.*

What they meant was that they have become helpless on account of poverty. They added:

> *We have brought merchandise of low value.*

In other words, traders will consider our merchandise of very low value and reject it.

They adopted this approach to stir the mercy and kindness of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and added:

> *Give us in full the measure.*

In other words, do not give us less by looking at the poor quality of our merchandise. They did not suffice with this. Instead, they added:

> *…and be charitable to us.*

In other words, we need you to give us in full, to be lenient to us and to accept our defective merchandise. If you do all this, it will be like a charity from you.

However, Dahhāk *rahimahullāh* and Ibn Jurayj *rahimahullāh* are of the view that their request to be charitable was a reference to the fact that they wanted him to return Binyāmīn to them. That is, in addition to giving us the grain, we request you to be so kind as to return Binyāmīn to us.

Naqqāsh states that the brothers said at the end:

اِنَّ اللّٰهَ يَجْزِي الْمُتَصَدِّقِيْنَ

Surely Allāh rewards the charitable.

They did not say:

إن الله تعالى يجزيك بصدقتك

Allāh taʿālā will reward you for your charity.

This is because they were under the assumption that the minister [Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*] was not a believer, and to say that Allāh *taʿālā* will reward you is not an honest statement. This is why they resorted to a general statement. They did not present this request at the beginning because they wanted to prepare him and stir him towards kindness first, and then to finally fulfil the objective of their father, viz. to request the return of Binyāmīn.

Bearing in mind that the words "and be charitable to us" could refer to their request for the release of Binyāmīn, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* replied by saying that you are asking for Binyāmīn, but "Do you know what you had done to Yūsuf and his brother when you lacked understanding?" Here the question was not about the action itself because when a mature thinking person does something, he does it after understanding and knowing what he is doing. They already knew what they had done. Why, then, did he pose this question? What he meant was that in your days of ignorance, you had done something to Yūsuf and his brother. Has the reprehensibility of your action dawned upon you or not? We gauge from this that the question was posed as a castigation. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* wanted to convey to them that the manner in which they had treated Yūsuf and his brother was a very serious thing; it was not an ordinary matter.

The brothers were most surprised and astonished when the minister [Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*] posed this question. They asked in their bewilderment: "Are you really Yūsuf?"

It is stated in *Rūh al-Maʿānī* that the ʿulamāʾ have various views on pinpointing the reason for their wanting to know his identity.

1. Based on his excellent treatment and good qualities, they concluded that he was Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*. On this occasion, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* had brought them very close to him.

2. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* had been speaking to them from behind a curtain, but when they wanted to know his identity, he removed the curtain.

3. In the course of their conversation with him, Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* smiled. This caused his front teeth to be exposed, and they recognized him through this because his teeth were like pearls and when he smiled, a type of light used to emanate from them.

4. Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* removed the crown which was on his head. And on his head he had certain signs which were also found on Hadrat Yaʿqūb, Hadrat Is-hāq and Sārah *ʿalayhimus salām*. When they saw those signs, they concluded that this was Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām*.

5. Through their entire interaction with Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and his manner of speech, they gauged that this person was a Muslim and from the progeny of Hadrat Ibrāhīm *ʿalayhis salām*.

6. The brothers hadn't recognized him with certainty as yet; rather they guessed it, and only recognized him when he said: "I am Yūsuf, and this is my brother. Allāh has been kind to us. Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous."

They only asked: "Are you really Yūsuf?" but he replied with an additional answer. This is known as

the answer of a wise-man. In other words, when they asked “Are you really Yūsuf?”, he replied: “Is this something to ask about? It is most obvious that I am Yūsuf. What you ought to have asked was, what are the favours which Allāh *taʿālā* conferred on you and your brother.” The additional answer of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* is also a completion of the question: “Do you know what you had done to Yūsuf and his brother?” This would mean: “You ought to remember how you ill-treated me and my brother and how you caused our separation. Now see, here I am and here is my brother. Look at how Allāh *taʿālā* favoured us. Look at how He removed us from that tribulation. Look at how He rejoined us. Look at how He replaced our suppression with honour. And look at how He replaced our distance with closeness and affinity.”

Taqwā and patience

Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* says that all this happened because Allāh *taʿālā* laid down this principle:

اِنَّهُ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.

In other words, when a person chooses piety under all conditions, saves his self from the things which earn Allāh’s wrath, is patient over hardships and calamities, is patient in carrying out good actions, and is patient in abstaining from sins which the carnal self enjoys; then Allāh *taʿālā* most certainly does not waste the reward of such righteous people.

Hadrat Mujāhid *rahimahullāh* says that the words “whoever is fearful and patient” refer to abstaining from sins and being patient in prison. Hadrat Nakhaʿī

rahimahullāh says it refers to abstaining from adultery and being patient on abstinence. It is also said that it refers to abstaining from sins and being patient over the taunts of people. Zamakhsharī *rahimahullāh* says that it refers to fearing Allāh *taʿālā* and being patient in abstaining from sins. In other words, the person abstains from sins and remains steadfast on obedience. Some 'ulamā' say that it means that the person is cautious about leaving out good deeds and committing evils, and is patient over hardships. A person has a choice as regards the first two [i.e. doing good deeds and abstaining from evils], and has no choice over hardships [he cannot control when they will come to him and when they will not]. Such a person is termed a righteous person.

The word patience could also refer to remaining firm on piety. We could therefore rephrase the verse by saying: "whoever is fearful and remains firm on Allāh's fear". Such a person is righteous in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*, and Allāh *taʿālā* does not allow the reward of the righteous to go to waste.

This is the point which I want to speak to you at present. That is:

المؤمن يثاب على حسناته في الدنيا والآخرة

A believer is rewarded for his good deeds in this world and in the Hereafter.

Allāh *taʿālā* made reference to this previously:

نُصِيْبُ بِرَحْمَتِنَا مَنْ نَّشَآءُ وَلَا نُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

We convey Our mercy to whomever We will and We do not waste the reward of the righteous.[1]

And here Allāh *taʿālā* says:

اِنَّهٗ مَنْ يَّتَّقِ وَيَصْبِرْ فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ لَا يُضِيْعُ اَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

Surely whoever is fearful and patient, Allāh does not destroy the reward of the righteous.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in Sūrah Āl ʿImrān:

فَاٰتٰهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْاٰخِرَةِ ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. Allāh loves the doers of good.[2]

Allāh *taʿālā* conveys the same theme as follows in Sūrah az-Zumar:

قُلْ يٰعِبَادِ الَّذِيْنَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوْا رَبَّكُمْ لِلَّذِيْنَ اَحْسَنُوْا فِيْ هٰذِهِ الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةٌ
وَّاَرْضُ اللّٰهِ وَاسِعَةٌ اِنَّمَا يُوَفَّى الصَّابِرُوْنَ اَجْرَهُمْ بِغَيْرِ حِسَابٍ.

Say: O My servants who believe! Fear your Lord. Those who did good in this world, for them is goodness. The earth of Allāh is vast. It is the patient alone who receive their reward without measure.[3]

The commentators explain this verse in two ways: (1) Reward in this world is preconditioned by the doing of good. (2) The words “this world” are connected to “goodness”. This would mean that the righteous are

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 56-57.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 148.

[3] Sūrah az-Zumar, 39: 10.

rewarded in this world as well, e.g. with good health, well-being. This is the minor reward while the full reward will be given in the Hereafter.

Glory to Allāh! Look at the consolation for those who are put through hardships. By saying this, Allāh *taʿālā* removes the difficulty of worship from His servants, creates enthusiasm in them, and makes it easy for them to remain steadfast on worship.

Now listen further! In addition to rewards in the Hereafter, Allāh *taʿālā* makes mention of worldly reward for His sincere servants. He says:

وَكَأَيِّنْ مِّنْ نَّبِيٍّ قٰتَلَ ۙ مَعَهُ رِبِّيُّوْنَ كَثِيْرٌ ۚ فَمَا وَهَنُوْا لِمَآ أَصَابَهُمْ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ وَمَا ضَعُفُوْا وَمَا اسْتَكَانُوْا ؕ وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الصّٰبِرِيْنَ.

There are many Prophets beside whom many seekers of Allāh fought. They did not lose heart upon being afflicted by any difficulty in the path of Allāh. Neither did they weaken nor did they become submissive [before the enemy]. Allāh loves the steadfast.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* states that one of the meanings of "neither did they weaken" is that they did not become weak in Dīn. For example, if they did not receive help, their faith and conviction did not waver. He states that the words "nor did they become submissive [before the enemy]" mean that they remained firm on the insight which they had. If they did not turn away from this, how will they ever turn away from Dīn! This verse makes reference to their excellent qualities in actions. The following verse makes reference to their excellent qualities as regards their words and statements:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 146.

وَمَا كَانَ قَوْلَهُمْ إِلَّا أَنْ قَالُوْا رَبَّنَا اغْفِرْ لَنَا ذُنُوْبَنَا وَإِسْرَافَنَا فِيْ اَمْرِنَا وَثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَنَا وَانْصُرْنَا عَلَى الْقَوْمِ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ.

They did not utter a thing except that they said: "O our Lord! Forgive us our sins and our excesses in our affairs, and make firm our feet, and give us help against the unbelieving people.[1]

فَاٰتٰهُمُ اللّٰهُ ثَوَابَ الدُّنْيَا وَحُسْنَ ثَوَابِ الْآخِرَةِ ط وَاللّٰهُ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ

So Allāh gave them the reward of this world and the excellent reward of the Hereafter. Allāh loves the doers of good.[2]

In other words, by virtue of their resoluteness and this supplication, Allāh *taʿālā* rewarded them in this world by helping them, giving them booty, victory, authority and power. And the excellent reward of the Hereafter – i.e. Allāh's pleasure, His mercy, or Paradise. Allāh's love is the basis for every type of goodness and fortune.

These verses encourage the believers to develop these qualities within them so that they can become eligible for these bounties and favours.

An obedient and a disobedient believer

Now listen further! Allāh *taʿālā* explains the difference between an obedient believer and a disobedient one. He says:

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 147.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 148.

اَمْ حَسِبَ الَّذِيْنَ اجْتَرَحُوا السَّيِّاٰتِ اَنْ نَّجْعَلَهُمْ كَالَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا وَعَمِلُوا الصّٰلِحٰتِ سَوَآءً مَّحْيَاهُمْ وَمَمَاتُهُمْ سَآءَ مَا يَحْكُمُوْنَ.

Do those who have earned evils think that We will make them equal to those who believed and did good deeds, so that their living and their dying will be the same? It is an evil claim which they make.[1]

In other words, do you think We will make the life and death of Muslims equal in the sense that just as they are less than the unbelievers as regards worldly possessions, they will be less than them in the Hereafter as well? Do you think that the life and death of the unbelievers will also be the same in the sense the unbelievers have more worldly possessions and so they will be the same in the Hereafter as well?

'Utbah, Shaybah and Walīd said to Hadrat 'Alī *radiyallāhu 'anhu*, Hadrat Hamzah *radiyallāhu 'anhu* and to other Muslims:

والله ما انتم على شيء، ولئن كان ما تقولون حقا، لنا أفضل من حالكم في الآخرة كما هو أفضل في الدنيا.[2]

First of Allāh, you people are not on any religion. Even if what you say is true, we will be in a better position than you in the Hereafter as we are in this world.

The above-quoted verse was revealed in response to this claim of the unbelievers. It is a refutation of their statement. This verse clearly demonstrates the difference between an obedient believer and a

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[1] Sūrah al-Jāthiyah, 45: 21.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٥، ص ١٥١.

disobedient one. It distinguishes one from the other. This is why many ardent worshippers used to cry when they used to read this verse. Consequently, it came to be known as:

مبكاة العابدين

The verse which makes the worshippers to cry.

Hadrat Tamīm Dārī *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* read Sūrah al-Jāthiyah on one occasion. When he came to the above-quoted verse, he continued reading it and cried over it until the next morning. He was standing near the Maqām-e-Ibrāhīm at the time.

Bashīr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* the freed slave of Rabīʿ ibn Khaytham says that Rabīʿ was performing salāh when he came to this verse. He read it repeatedly until the next morning.

When Hadrat Fudayl ibn ʿIyād *rahimahullāh* used to read this verse, he used to address his self: "If only I knew with certainty which group I belong to."

Ibn ʿAtīyyah *rahimahullāh* says that we learn from the words "earned evils" that they refer to unbelief because īmān is mentioned as its opposite. This is why those who read this verse, they are overtaken by fear and they cry profusely. This was the condition of the Ahlullāh in their respective times.

The flagrant sinners and immoral people

Now see what the author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* writes about the flagrant sinners and immoral ones:

ورأيت كثيرا من المغرورين المستغرقين ليلهم ونهارهم بالفسق الفجور يقولون بلسان القال والحال نحن يوم القيامة أفضل حالا من كثير من

العابدين. وهذا منهم العياذ بالله تعالى ضلال بعيد وغرور ما عليه مزيد.[1]

I saw many of the arrogant ones whose nights and days are filled with flagrant sinning and immoral acts saying both verbally and through their actions: "We will be in a better condition on the day of Resurrection than many of the worshippers." This – and we seek refuge in Allāh taʿālā – is an extreme blasphemy from them and a deception beyond which there is no worse deception.

All we can do is read the Qur'ān and Hadīth to you, and you can then decide whether you want to understand or not, and put into practise or not. Allāh *taʿālā* explained such themes in the Qur'ān that just one verse can be enough to stir the īmān of a believer. Allāh *taʿālā* says while castigating the hypocrites:

بَشِّرِ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ بِأَنَّ لَهُمْ عَذَابًا أَلِيْمَا ۙ الَّذِيْنَ يَتَّخِذُوْنَ الْكٰفِرِيْنَ أَوْلِيَآءَ مِنْ دُوْنِ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ ؕ أَيَبْتَغُوْنَ عِنْدَهُمُ الْعِزَّةَ فَإِنَّ الْعِزَّةَ لِلّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا.

Give glad tidings to the hypocrites that for them is a painful punishment. They who take the unbelievers as their friends to the exclusion of Muslims. Do they seek honour from them? Surely all honour belongs to Allāh alone.[2]

The hypocrites met with the unbelievers because they felt they could not overpower the Muslims, they have to live with them, so they should not spoil the relationship with them. Allāh *taʿālā* refuted their

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[1] روح المعاني، جزء ٢٥، ص ١٥١.

[2] Sūrah an-Nisā', 4: 138-139.

thoughts by saying: "Surely all honour belongs to Allāh alone."

In other words, power and honour are in Allāh's control; He gives them to whomever He wills. This also tells us that He has reserved honour for His Auliyā'. Allāh *taʿālā* says in this regard:

وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ

Power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers.

Power and honour are for every such person for whom Allāh wills. The honour which Allāh *taʿālā* has is His own, the honour which Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* enjoys is from Allāh *taʿālā*, and the honour which believers enjoy is by virtue of their īmān in Allāh *taʿālā* and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. There is no honour for anyone else.

This verse was revealed in reference to those hypocrites who were deluded by their wealth and authority, and therefore considered themselves to be the ones who spend on the Muslims, and felt that they were honourable while the Muslims were ignoble. These beliefs which were in their hearts came out and were expressed by their tongues. Allāh *taʿālā* makes reference to this in Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn as follows:

هُمُ الَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَا تُنْفِقُوْا عَلٰى مَنْ عِنْدَ رَسُوْلِ اللّٰهِ حَتّٰى يَنْفَضُّوْا، وَلِلّٰهِ خَزَآئِنُ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالْاَرْضِ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَفْقَهُوْنَ.

It is they who say: "Do not spend on those who remain with the Messenger of Allāh till they disperse." To Allāh

belongs the treasures of the heavens and the earth, but the hypocrites do not understand.[1]

They do not understand because they assumed that the sustenance of the city was dependent on the spending of its people.

يَقُوْلُوْنَ لَئِنْ رَّجَعْنَآ اِلَى الْمَدِيْنَةِ لَيُخْرِجَنَّ الْاَعَزُّ مِنْهَا الْاَذَلَّ، وَلِلّٰهِ الْعِزَّةُ وَلِرَسُوْلِهِ وَلِلْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ وَلٰكِنَّ الْمُنٰفِقِيْنَ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ.

They say: "If we return to Madīnah, the powerful ones will expel there-from those who are weak." Power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers. But the hypocrites do not know.[2]

The above-quoted statement of the hypocrites is based on absolute ignorance.

Man seeks only two things in this world, either wealth or position. Allāh *taʿālā* says that the keys to both are in His hands. He says: "To Allāh belong the treasures of the heavens and the earth." He says thereafter: "Power belongs to Allāh, His Messenger and the believers."

These verses are recited to us to teach us that if we desire honour, wealth or power; we must seek it from Allāh *taʿālā* alone because He alone has the keys to all these treasures. Allāh *taʿālā* relates the story of Hadrat Yūsuf *ʿalayhis salām* and thereby presents an example of this to the believers and righteous – look at how Allāh *taʿālā* confers His bounties to His righteous servants in this world and in the Hereafter.

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[1] Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 7.

[2] Sūrah al-Munāfiqūn, 63: 8.

Relating these stories in the Qur'ān is with a view to strengthening the īmān of people, and so that they affirm His promises and believe them with all their heart. If we hold on to the Qur'ān and study Sūrah Yūsuf alone, it will suffice to revive our īmān and to develop conviction in Allāh's promises. It is a unique and most interesting Sūrah. It contains most effective and admonitory themes. Allāh *taʿālā* refers to it as the most beautiful of stories.

نَحْنُ نَقُصُّ عَلَيْكَ اَحْسَنَ الْقَصَصِ بِمَآ اَوْحَيْنَآ اِلَيْكَ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ

We narrate to you a very beautiful narrative, the reason for which We sent to you this Qur'ān.[1]

The author of *Rūh al-Maʿānī* explains the reason why it is the most beautiful of stories. He writes:

وانما كان ذلك أحسن القصص لتضمنه ذكر العاشق والمعشوق، وذلك مما ترتاح له النفوس أو لما فيه من بيان حقائق محبة المحبين وصفاء سر العارفين والتنبيه على حسن عواقب الصادقين والحث على سلوك سبيل المتوكلين والإقتداء بزهد الزاهدين والدلالة على الانقطاع إلى الله تعالى والاعتماد عليه عند نزول الشدائد والكشف عن أحوال الخائنين وقبح طرائق الكاذبين وابتلاء الخواص بأنواع المحن وتبديليها بأنواع الألطاف والمنن مع ذكر ما يدل على سياسة الملوك وحالهم مع رعيتهم إلى غير ذلك.[2]

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 3.

[2] روح المعاني، جزء ١٣.

The story of Hadrat Yūsuf ʿalayhis salām is referred to as a most beautiful story because it makes mention of a lover and his beloved; and this is something which is enjoyed by the self. Or, because it describes the realities of the love of the lovers and the internal purity of those who truly recognized Allāh taʿālā. It draws attention to the beautiful end of the truthful ones, and encourages a person to tread the path of those who rely on Allāh taʿālā and to emulate the ascetics. It shows them the way to cut one's self from all and turn to Allāh taʿālā alone, and to rely solely on Him at the time of hardships and difficulties. It exposes the conditions of the treacherous and the evil ways of the liars. It shows how the selected servants of Allāh taʿālā are put through various tribulations and how they are then changed into various favours and bounties. This story also gives us an insight into how kings rule and their interactions with their subjects.

In short, this Sūrah is a great admonition for the believer.

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِيْ قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ لِّأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ط مَا كَانَ حَدِيْثًا يُّفْتَرٰى وَلٰكِنْ
تَصْدِيْقَ الَّذِيْ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيْلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَّهُدًى وَّرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُّؤْمِنُوْنَ.

There is certainly a lesson in their stories for those who possess intelligence. This is no fabricated tale. Rather it is in accordance with the Book which is before it, an exposition of everything, a guidance, and a mercy for those people who believe.[1]

If a Book contains so many admonitory lessons, it is inevitable for a person to derive admonition from it.

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[1] Sūrah Yūsuf, 12: 111.

Note: Glory to Allāh! Just look at the academic and scholarly discussion of H̲ad̲rat Mus̲lih̲ul Ummat *rah̲imahullāh*. It demonstrates his expertise in the field of rectification and his affinity with the Qur'ān. (compiler)

A DEFINITION OF CHARACTER

A Maulānā S̲āh̲ib had come here. I explained the definition of good character and bad character in one of my assemblies. When he went back to his house, he wrote a letter to me: "I constantly repeat whatever I heard from you. However, I cannot recall the definition of good character and bad character which you had quoted from *Tars̲īʿ*. Kindly have someone to write it and send it to me."

I had said to him that the author of *Tars̲īʿ* writes:

إعلم أن ضبط قوتي الشهوة والغضب على ما يقتضيه الشرع والعقل هو حسن الخلق المحمود.

Good praiseworthy character entails restraining the carnal and wrathful powers according to the demands of the Sharīʿah and the intellect.

Abstaining from the above, i.e. not restraining the carnal and wrathful powers according to the demands of the Sharīʿat and intellect will be evil or bad character. This is indeed an excellent and comprehensive definition of good and bad character. I did not see it explained in this way in any other book. It was with regard to this definition that the Maulānā S̲āh̲ib wrote the letter and said that he cannot recall it.

Nowadays people think that good character entails speaking sweetly, and that if a person says something in total contradiction to what is in his heart then it is good character. This is not the case. I said to someone: "Nowadays there is everything, but the noble character of Muh̲ammad *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* is nowhere to be seen. Waz̲īfahs and other spiritual

practices are to be seen everywhere, but the spark of the character of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* cannot be seen anywhere.”

Note: Hadrat is absolutely correct. Let alone the laity, this quality is not found among the ʿulamā’ also. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*. (compiler)

Are you listening to the definition of good and bad character as explained by the author? Intellect also demands that these things not be abandoned completely. Rather, they should be subjugated to the Sharīʿah and the intellect. Distinguished scholars are writing this while some of our Sufis feel that mere reading of wazīfahs is enough. Do you know why they don’t discuss rectification of character? Because it is very difficult to put into practice. People find it difficult to merely learn about it and acquire correct knowledge of it. People adopt what is easy and leave aside what is difficult. They do not have even this much intelligence to learn it from someone and understand it. I am now talking on this subject but people are probably thinking that people did not perform tahajjud, this is why I am so angry.

Nowadays ignorance has encompassed every level of society. This is what is preventing us from moving forward. Even if a distinguished shaykh wants to remove them from this ignorance, they are not ready to leave it. Their carnal self is saying to them: “This way has been coming down to us from our forefathers, so we cannot give it up.”

The above-quoted definition is most beautiful. That Maulānā Sāhib liked it and appreciated it.

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Hadrat looked towards a lawyer and said: When you came to me the first time you said: “I read 200

lectures of Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh.*" I said: "When you sit before such great personalities, you must be very careful because the rectification of such people is very difficult." If a person goes with an open mind, it is easy to teach and explain to him, but very difficult to teach the one who makes claims to knowledge. It is inevitable for a defective person to make claims to perfection. A defective person is defined as a person who makes claims to perfection in a manner which you did not hear. Similarly, a person should not make claims of equality with one who is a qualified shaykh because the latter always considers himself to be defective. As for the one who is defective, he does not look at his defects; he thinks that he is perfect. This is why he does not get the inspiration to strive for and reach perfection.

Hadrat Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* said: "I said to Sayyid ʿAbd al-Malik Harbūnī *rahimahullāh*: 'Please give me some advice.' He said: 'O Ahmad! The one who looks here and there cannot reach his objective. (A person reaches his objective when he shifts his gaze from everything else and focuses on his objective alone.) The person who has doubts cannot be successful. The one who does not see any faults and defects within him is spending all his time in loss.'"[1]

This has been said by all the distinguished mashā'ikh of the past. The same point is made in the *Mathnawī*, i.e. it is essential for a qualified shaykh to focus on his defects and faults all the time.

Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* used to say that Shaykh Muhīyy ad-Dīn ʿArabī *rahimahullāh* said that when a person is in the initial stages of sulūk, he sees

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[1] *Al-Bunyān al-Mushayyad*, p. 91.

many good dreams. On the other hand, the one who is at the end of his spiritual journey sees very few dreams. The reason for this is that a novice engages in many wazīfahs in the beginning. He sees the effects of them in the form of good dreams. As for the expert, because he has more recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*, he does not focus on anything personal. Instead, he is constantly fearful of Allāh *taʿālā*. He considers all his actions to be worthless before the recognition of Allāh *taʿālā*. When he is in this condition, he sees defects even in his dreams.

Restraining one's desires and anger

Look at the beautiful definition of good character as given by the author [mentioned previously]. That is, good character entails restraining one's carnal and wrathful powers and subjugating them to the Sharīʿat and the intellect. And giving free reign to them entails bad character. You are probably thinking that there are many categories of good character and bad character; how, then, can good character develop in a person by restraining only his carnal and wrathful powers? In the same way, there are many categories of bad character, and following one's carnal desires and giving vent to one's wrathful powers are just two of them.

The answer to this is that the carnal and wrathful powers are the foundations. When they are rectified, many good qualities will develop. For example, if the carnal power is subjugated to the Sharīʿat and the intellect, noble attributes like chastity, contentment, abstinence, modesty, etc. will develop in a person. Similarly, when the wrathful power is restrained and subjugated to the Sharīʿat and intellect, the attributes of bravery, generosity, courage, patience, forbearance, pardon, etc. will develop in a person.

On the other hand, if these two powers are not restrained, then the opposites of the above-mentioned good qualities will develop in man. Thus, if the carnal power is not restrained, it will result in greed, avarice, extravagance, miserliness, flattery, jealousy, malice, rejoicing over a calamity which has afflicted another, and so on. In the same way, when the wrathful power is not restrained, it will result in anger, pride, scorn, belittling others, despising people, oppression, etc.

When these two powers are given a leeway and not made subservient to the intellect and the Sharīʿat, thoughts of obedience to Shayṯān settle in a person's mind. Once he obeys Shayṯān, then man adopts the various Satanic qualities such as evil plotting, deception, cunningness, trickery, cheating, etc. These qualities are most toxic poisons which will take the form of serpents and scorpions in the grave as stated by Imām Ghazzālī *raẖimahullāh*.

When man does not subjugate his carnal and wrathful powers to the Sharīʿat and intellect, he starts wronging his own self in the sense that this noble element which was entitled to be appointed as his leader is now being used as a servant of these three wretched things – viz. carnal and wrathful powers, and Shayṯān. It is inevitable for him to now wrong his heart which is then made into a hard heart to the extent that advice and admonitions do not benefit it, and it cannot absorb any wisdom. This is known as a sealed heart. It is a serious injustice in the sense that the king has been made to obey the carnal self which can be equated to a pig, anger which is like an animal of prey has been subjugated, and the worst enemy – Shayṯān – has been made the ruler.

Man – so to speak – has turned the entire system upside down and changed the scheme of Allāh *taʿālā*.

These elements were the kings and the body parts were to be subjugated under their orders. The rectitude of the entire body is dependent on their rectitude, while their corruption results in the corruption of the entire body. Man has turned the ruler into the subject, and the subject into the ruler.[1]

Listen! Ta<u>s</u>awwuf is an academic thing so must you acquire knowledge of it. Only then will you be able to do the work in the correct manner. In addition to this, if you desire excellence and want to acquire the qualities of true men, it will be necessary for you to search for a qualified shaykh, hand your self over to him, and enter under his training completely. Although no era was ever devoid of a qualified shaykh, he was a rare find. Most of the mashā'ikh used to teach and instruct dhikr for the sake of blessings. They used to do this so that the murīd may attach himself to the Sufi lineage, develop love for the Sufis, accept their saintliness and have conviction in their words. Anyway, it was not permissible for them to teach them anything else. Making them to wear the garment of the Sufis or tying a turban on their heads were also done so that they may obtain blessings from the outer appearance of the Sufis. These personalities did not consider such people to be their true followers except those who followed their ways. That is, who adopted the qualities which they possessed.

On the point of "blessings", the commentator states that this means that all these practices were for the sake of blessings and not for actual sulūk – treading of the Sufi path. This is because they were not even eligible for it, and the sheikdom was only in appearance. One benefit of this was that people could

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[1] *Tar<u>s</u>īʿ*, p. 8.

develop love for the Sufis and so that some hearts may become attached to others until this lineage goes up to Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

On the point of "it was not permissible for them to teach them anything else" the commentator writes that not only was it not permissible for them, it was obligatory on them to inform those who wanted to tread the path by saying to them: "We are only imitating the people of the Sufi path, we are not experts in it."[1]

This is what I have always been telling you – that people want to make the Sufis a source of blessings. You people must have understood by now that learning the path is one thing, and making someone a source of blessings is something else.

The prerequisites and etiquette of servitude and the path

One of the etiquette of servitude is that the seeker must not seek to achieve victory because such a quest negates servitude. If a seeker seeks victory first, he will lose far more than what he gains. Shaykh Akbar *rah̲imahullāh* highlights this point in *Lawāqih̲ Asrār*. The reason is that Allāh *taʿālā* created man and appointed this world as the place of imposition. That is, he is commanded to carry out certain orders and abstain from certain prohibitions. It is now his job to keep away from the prohibitions and seek the inspiration of Allāh *taʿālā*. Man must also prepare his heart in such a way that the divinity of anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā* must not enter it. Furthermore, he must sever all ties which will be harmful to this servitude.

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[1] *Tars̲īʿ*, p. 12.

As for the fruits of actions, it is not appropriate to seek them because they are connected to Allāh *taʿālā* and are from Him. He had the right to confer them in this world or to defer them for the Hereafter. If a servant seeks the fruits and results of actions in this world of imposition, it will be most disrespectful for two reasons. One is that he interfered in a matter which concerns Allāh *taʿālā*. The other is that he acted in this world in a manner which is not in line with its reality. After all, this world is a place of action, not a place of recompense. Furthermore, he sought the recompense of his actions in this world; and this is most disrespectful. Yes, if Allāh *taʿālā* confers anything, he must accept it respectfully. He must not feel smug over it, and if he feels happy about it, it must be because it is a gift from Allāh *taʿālā* which is an indication of His pleasure. In other words, he must not be happy over the favour but be happy over the pleasure of the One who conferred it. And if it is taken away, he must not be saddened. Instead, he must firmly believe that he has no right over anything.

مرادي منك نسيان المراد – إذا رمت السبيل إلى الرشاد

When I tread the path to rectitude and success, then my objective must be to forget my objective.

A true servant is pleased with Allāh *taʿālā* in every condition and situation – irrespective of whether he enjoys prosperity or suffers adversity, or is inspired with abundant worship or is given a small share of it. This is because they do not know in what there is good.

An incident related to Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham

The following story of Hadrat Ibrāhīm ibn Ad-ham *rahimahullāh* supports the above theme. He relates:

One night I was engaged in dhikr and fell asleep. I was quite disturbed by this. In those days, I used to rely on my actions. I was therefore punished by causing me to fall asleep and miss some of my obligations. I then heard a voice within me saying: "O Ibrāhīm! Become Our servant and you will find comfort. If We cause you to sleep, you must sleep. If We cause you to get up, you must get up. There is nothing in-between for you."

We said previously that "they do not know in what there is good". Sometimes Allāh *taʿālā* causes His servants to fall into sin while it is for their own good. He causes them to do this so that they cannot vex pride over their good actions. This is why it is said that sin which causes submission and servitude is better than obedience which becomes a cause of pride and arrogance. A Hadīth states that sometimes a person commits a sin but is admitted into Paradise on account of it. What this means is that he seeks forgiveness for having committed it and repents to Allāh *taʿālā*. Allāh *taʿālā* pardons him. The person then remains fearful, and whenever he thinks of the sin he feels ashamed. These are obviously good things.

To sum up, servitude refers to carrying out orders and abstaining from prohibitions. This is done solely because it is Allāh's order and not for any other reason. One etiquette in this regard is that the person must be pleased with Allāh *taʿālā* in every condition and never think that he has his own choice in any matter. Nowadays these Sufis are smug over their actions and are also focusing on the fruits of their actions. They are just like Shaykh Challī.

The story of Shaykh Challī

You must have heard the story of Shaykh Challī. A soldier hired him to carry a container of ghee in return for a payment. He placed the container on his head and proceeded. As he was walking, he thought to himself: When I receive the money for carrying this ghee, I will buy a hen and eggs. I will place the eggs under the hen. When the eggs hatch, I will sell the chicks and buy a goat. When the goat gives birth to kids, I will sell them and buy a cow. In this way, the money which I get from the hen, goat and cow, I will buy a house, get married and have children. If they come to me and say: “Father, give us some money”, I will say: “No.”

He shook his head when he said no, and the container of ghee fell off his head. The container broke and all the ghee flowed away. The soldier got angry when he saw this. Shaykh Challī said: “All that you lost was a few rupees’ worth of ghee, while I lost my entire estate and family.”

Did you see! He hadn’t received his payment as yet and he was already building castles in the air. This is the condition of people today – they do not do anything and want to receive saintliness.

Now listen further! It is related in *Fath ar-Rabbānī* that a person bought a slave and asked him: “What kind of clothes would you like to wear?” He replied: “Whatever the master gives me to wear.” The master asked: “Okay, what type of work do you want to do?” He replied: “Whatever the master orders.” The master asked: “In which part of the house do you want to live?” He replied: “Wherever you order me.” On hearing this, the master said: “You are a strange person, you have no opinion about anything!?”

The slave said: “O my master! Can a slave ever have any opinion of his own in the presence of his master?” When the master heard this, he said: “O I wish I was before my own master [Allāh *ta'ālā*] as you are before me. You have made me see the reality and you have become my benefactor. I therefore free you for Allāh’s sake. I request you to live here so that I can be of service to you.”

This is what you call a slave. Servitude means that you only carry out the orders of your master and do not seek any recompense for it. Now if someone doesn’t follow this basic procedure and still wants to realize success, then how can it be possible? A task is only achieved when the correct procedure is followed. If a person is a labourer, his focus must be solely on his work and not on the fruits of the labour. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* conveys this theme in the following couplet:

> Do not be a servant like a poor person who does work on condition he receives payment. This is because your Master is fully aware of the way of servitude.

This is an excellent couplet on Allāh-recognition. If Hadrat Maulānā’s lectures contained nothing else, this couplet would have sufficed.

Focus on the work

The mashā’ikh say that the quest for victory negates servitude, and that it does not behove a true servant to seek the fruits of actions. It is disrespectful for him to do this. I agree with this and add one point to it, viz. in addition to it being disrespectful, one harm is that when the focus is on the results and fruits, the work will not be done totally and completely. If you

focus on the results, you will not be able to do the work properly.

Hadrat addressed a person saying: You work in the court and you have to do some reading and writing. Now if you think about your salary and become engrossed in thoughts about it, you will not be able to focus on your work and will not complete it. In fact, it is not far-fetched that you will write down the thoughts which are running through your mind on the official papers. You will certainly receive your salary on the appointed day. At present it is your duty to do your work and carry out your tasks with full concentration, and to abstain from thinking about your salary.

We observe that only the person who does his work correctly is the one who progresses. Those who work well are the ones who are selected and chosen. Although he is chosen by someone else, the basis is his work. In this world, the work is looked at. Unfortunately, these same people become foolish and stupid in Dīnī matters.

The rule is that focus must be on the work; not on the results. If a person worries about the results, the work will not be done. Now listen to a story related to the value of work. I happened to go to a village in the surrounding areas of Jaunpūr. I noticed a large and imposing building in this small village. I was surprised to see such a grand building in such a small village. When I enquired I was informed that a man from that family went for some work to Hyderabad. On one occasion, he was at a place where the Nawāb and his minister were having a discussion and they had different opinions on a certain matter. The man heard both their arguments and addressed the minister: "You are wrong while the Nawāb Sāhib is right. And

this is the proof for it." The man's explanation made a lot of sense plus it was supported by proof. The Nawāb S̲āh̲ib was most impressed and employed him. In this way, the man became wealthy and had this imposing house built in his village. We learn from this that a person is chosen and selected by someone else, but it is based on his work.

This is what that [previously mentioned] saint is saying. That is, a servant has no right to ask Allāh *taʿālā* for victory. He is merely a servant; he must do his work. It is the Master's work to pay and reward him as and when He wills. The other point which we learn is that this is a matter with a Being who is most generous and most merciful. He is fully aware of the ways of servitude. There is no need for a servant to work on the condition of payment. His favours and bounties are continually showered in various ways.

H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* used to say that there was a murīd who used to constantly say certain things to his shaykh. The shaykh got fed up one day and said: "Get out and knock your head against the wall." The murīd got up to do just that. A voice from the unseen said: "Are you asking My friend to knock his head against a wall?" On hearing this voice, both the shaykh and the murīd were overjoyed. The shaykh experienced the joy of divine inspiration because when they receive inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā*, they experience intense joy. The murīd was overjoyed because Allāh *taʿālā* referred to him as "My friend". There can be no greater joyous occasion than this for the one who is seeking Allāh *taʿālā*.

Listen further! He said: The self is more inclined towards optional devotions because whatever the person does, he does out of his own will and volition. The self experiences the enjoyment of personal will

and volition. As for the obligatory acts of worship, the self is overpowered. When something is done as an obligation, the self has no personal will and volition. Rather, it has to follow the Sharīʿat. It is probably for this reason that the rewards for obligatory acts are more. After all, the self finds them more difficult. This is probably one of the many reasons why it is necessary for a person to go under the training of a qualified shaykh. When he does this, the self will become subjugated to his orders and prohibitions. The self will have no control over the person's actions and he will not be able to follow the demands of his desires. This is such an important and essential matter that the ʿulamā' have went to the extent of saying that it is better for a person to be under the rule of a cat than to be under the dictates of his self.[1]

The author refers to optional devotions because when man has something of his own, he attributes it to himself. He has full freedom and choice to put it into action or not to. He experiences a type of enjoyment in this freedom. This is why the self is more inclined towards optional acts of worship. As for the obligations imposed by Allāh *taʿālā*, the self has no choice in them. The rewards for obligatory acts is more than for optional acts because obligatory acts are difficult on the self. They are more difficult because they are devoid of the enjoyment of the self.

I say, this happens in the beginning because if you look at the Ahlullāh, they thoroughly enjoy carrying out the obligatory duties.

The author takes this one step further by saying that just as it is difficult to carry out obligatory actions, it

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[1] *Tars̱īʿ*, p. 28.

is difficult to follow a shaykh. It is difficult for a person to hand himself over to the training of a mentor and to put an end to his own will. The reason for this is that it also entails following and obeying someone else, and because the enjoyment of the self is wiped out completely. This notwithstanding the fact that the results are excellent. The self which is an obstacle from developing a genuine bond with Allāh *taʿālā* is put to an end, and the person is able to reach Allāh *taʿālā* easily. On the other hand, as long as he is under the subjugation of his self, it will be impossible for him to reach Allāh *taʿālā*. In such a case, it will be far better for a person to obey an animal – like a cat – because since he will not be able to reach Allāh *taʿālā*, he will at least be saved from following his self and being destroyed.

THE MEANS FOR SAFEGUARDING DĪN

In his *at-Tanbīh aṯ-Ṯarabī*, H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī *rah̲imahullāh* quotes the following statement of Shaykh Muh̲īyy ad-Dīn ibn al-ʿArabī *rah̲imahullāh*:

واعلم أن تقديم الكشف على النص ليس بشيء عندنا لكثرة اللبس على أهله، وإلا فالكشف الصحيح لا يأتي قط إلا موافقا لظاهر الشريعة.[١]

To give preference to kashf (exposition) over an explicit text is absolutely baseless according to us. This is because those who experience kashf are very often confused. On the other hand, genuine kashf (which is devoid of confusion) is always in line with the Sharīʿah.

Shaykh Akbar *rah̲imahullāh* makes reference to a most important and essential principle. He shows the status of kashf by saying that it is subservient to the Sharīʿat and that the Sharīʿat is always given preference over it. The reason he gives is that the person who experiences kashf is, in most cases, confused.

I say, this is the condition with other means of knowledge as well. For example, a person can be confused when he witnesses something or resorts to his intelligence. An observation is sometimes wrong, and the intelligentsia also have severe differences among themselves. This is why the basis is the Sharīʿat and not the intellect. Kashf and other similar phenomena cannot be relied upon because they are

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[1] التنبيه الطربي، ص ٨.

not solely divine; they could also be satanic. However, because the external form of both is the same, the person who experiences kashf sometimes considers satanic kashf to be divine. He is then deceived and falls from grace. An example of how this confusion can take place is given by Shaykh Akbar himself. ʿAllāmah Shaʿrānī *ra<u>h</u>imahullāh* quotes it in *al-Yawāqīt wa al-Jawāhir*:

قال الشيخ عبد القادر الجيلاني قد تراءئ لي مرة نور عظيم ملأ الأفق، ثم بدت لي فيه صورة تنادي با عبد القادر، أنا ربك وقد اسقطت عنك التكاليف، فإن شئت فاعبدني وإن شئت فاترك. فقلت له: اخسأ يا لعين، فإذا ذلك النور صار ظلاما، وتلك الصورة صارت دخانا. ثم خاطبني اللعين فقال لي: يا عبد القادر، نجوت مني بعلمك بأحكام ربك وفقهك في أحوال منازلاتك، ولقد أضللت بمثل هذه الواقعة سبعين من أهل الطريق.

Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī said: On one occasion I saw a grand light which covered the horizon. I then saw a shape inside which called out to me saying: "O Abd al-Qādir! I am your lord. I have absolved you of all the obligations of the Sharīʿah. If you want, you may worship me, and if you wish, you can give up worshipping me." I said: "Get away you cursed one." The moment I said this, the light turned into darkness and that shape turned into smoke. The cursed one then addressed me saying: "O ʿAbd al-Qādir! You saved yourself from my deception by virtue of your knowledge of the injunctions of your Lord and understanding of your ranks. I have already led astray 70 mashā'ikh from the path in similar ways.

فقيل للشيخ عبد القادر من أين عرفت أنه شيطان، فقال بإحلاله لي ما حرمه الله على لسان رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم فإنه تعالى لا يحرم شيئا على ألسنة رسله ثم يبيحه لأحد في السر أبدًا.

Someone asked Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir: "How did you recognize that he was Shayṯān?" He replied: "When he made lawful for me what Allāh had made unlawful on the tongue of Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Allāh taʿālā will never make something unlawful on the tongues of His Messengers and then permit it to someone else in secrecy."

What a unique story! The cursed Shayṯān did not even leave a great Sufi like Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *raẖimahullāh* and did his utmost to confuse him. H̲ad̲rat Shaykh was a man who belonged to the Sufi lineage. This is why Allāh *taʿālā* enabled him to catch the thief. Furthermore, it will serve as a proof for latter generations and so that they could take guidance from it.

He was an expert in the Sharīʿat and was firm on it, this is why he was not deceived by him. This, notwithstanding the fact that Shayṯān did his utmost to delude him and appeared in the form of kashf. H̲ad̲rat Shaykh *raẖimahullāh* weighed his kashf on the scale of the Sharīʿat. He thought to himself that when Allāh *taʿālā* made something unlawful through Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*, how can it become lawful later on? It is never the norm of Allāh *taʿālā* to make something unlawful through His Prophets and Messengers, and then make it secretly lawful to someone else. This can never happen. Based on this principle, H̲ad̲rat Shaykh *raẖimahullāh* immediately understood that this kashf is not from Allāh *taʿālā* but from Shayṯān. This is why he asked

him to get away. The moment he said this, the light changed to darkness and the shape which he saw turned to smoke. Shayṯān frankly admitted that the Shaykh was able to save himself by virtue of his knowledge of the injunctions of Allāh *taʿālā* and his understanding of his ranks and levels. This is why he could not deceive him.

As for the 70 people whom he deluded through similar incidents, they must have been people who used to engage in different acts of worship but were devoid of knowledge of the Sharīʿat. This enabled Shayṯān to deceive them.

I now say that we clearly learn from this incident that Shayṯān is able to delude and deceive the saints and Sufis when they do not cling to the Sharīʿat. The further away a Sufi is from the Sharīʿat, the quicker he will be deceived by Shayṯān. The more he is steadfast on the Sharīʿat, the more he will be protected from Shayṯān.

Look at how Shayṯān tried to deceive a great personality like H̱aḏrat Shaykh ʿAbd al-Qādir Jīlānī *raẖimahullāh*. However, the Shaykh had knowledge of the Sharīʿat, and so he was protected on account of it although Shayṯān left no stone unturned in trying to deceive him.

The fact of the matter is that some people consider themselves to be people of divine affinity and light, and believe that it is due to their own blessings. This is why they get caught up in such incidents. Whereas it is not necessary for every light to be divine light; it could also be from Shayṯān. This is how they get deluded. As for those Sufis who have knowledge of the Sharīʿat, they are able to differentiate between the two immediately and act accordingly. We learn from this that the only way to preserve divine affinity and

spirituality is by holding on firmly to the Sharīʿat. It is only through the Sharīʿat that man can save himself from such tribulations. There is no other way. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless us with knowledge of the Sharīʿat and the Sunnat. Āmīn.

COMPASSION IS ESSENTIAL FOR RECTIFICATION

I feel that whatever evils have crept into worldly and religious people are due to evil qualities and traits. And the worst of these qualities is anger. Anger causes an evil temperament in a person which replaces his original temperament. When I was in my hometown I used to observe my family people venting their anger on each other. When I tried to correct and rectify them in this regard, they used to say that I was ill-mannered. This notwithstanding the fact that I lived in Thānah Bhawan and was trained there. I used to keep the Qur'ān and Sunnat before me and gauge my conditions and characteristics against them. Despite this, they felt that I was a very angry person and they were very good. Whereas they were ignorant, and their ignorance was coming down to them from their forefathers. When I realized that they are offended despite my affection and kindness which I displayed to them, I decided to change my approach and became extremely lenient and compassionate. In today's times, leniency is essential. When I adopted this approach, I experienced good results in my own self. My heart and mind experienced peace, and this had a good effect on my health.

Note: I wish we showed concern for our rectification so that the soul of Hadrat *rahimahullāh* would become pleased and our end would become good. (compiler)

After having experience with my people in the field of rectification, I realized that leniency and compassion are essential for a reformer. In other words, if you want to see any benefit and good results, it will only be through leniency and not through severity. This is why I am saying to you people that you must adopt a soft approach with your associates and family

members. Success is guaranteed in this approach. I say to people: Brother! If you find your family members to be bad-mannered, irresponsible and disorganized; you must adopt good manners, be responsible and organized; and set right your affairs in this way. If you are going to be bad-mannered, irresponsible and disorganized like them, your house will be destroyed.

OPENING THE DOOR OF THE UNSEEN

The author of *Tarsīʿ* says: Previously we mentioned to you that opening the door to the unseen is dependent on giving up all disobediences, acting on all acts of obedience, and cleansing the heart of all reprehensible qualities and characteristics.

Since you are seated here, I will say a few words to you. If you listen to them, they will be of use to you and to others. However, I notice that most people do not listen to what I say. Look! These personalities are the mashā'ikh of their time. They collated their sciences in these books. If they are not studied, you will remain ignorant of many things and the door will be closed to you. Now look at what a beautiful point they made: Opening the door to the unseen is dependent on giving up all disobediences, acting on all acts of obedience, and cleansing the heart of all reprehensible qualities and characteristics.

I explained previously that one of my friends quoted to me the statement of someone else who said: "The Maulwīs do not become saints because they do not engage in spiritual practices." When I heard this, I kept silent but later on I came to the conclusion that this statement is not right. Firstly because it is wrong to say that the 'ulamā' do not become saints because there are many 'ulamā' who became saints. Assuming a Maulwī does not become a saint, then it is not because he does not engage in spiritual practices. Rather, sainthood is dependent on discarding the carnal self. Thus, the Maulwī who discards the carnal self, carries out acts of obedience and gives up sins becomes a walī of Allāh *taʿālā*. The one who does not do these things does not become a walī.

In the same way, if a non-ʿālim acts against the demands of his carnal self and follows Allāh's injunctions, then he too will become a walī. And if he does not do these things, he will not become a walī. We cannot make a general rule that Maulwīs do not become saints nor can we say that the laity cannot become saints. There are all types of people in this world. Some Maulwīs do not discard the carnal self and do not adopt the injunctions of the Sharīʿat, and some common people also do not do the same. Such people do not reach Allāh *taʿālā*.

The author of *Tarsīʿ* made this a general rule without specifying any particular person or group. Whether he is an ʿālim or a non-ʿālim, as long as a person carries out acts of obedience and abstains from sins, the door of the unseen which was closed will be opened to him. This is in line with the Sharīʿat because the Sharīʿat instructs us to carry out acts of obedience.

Allāh *taʿālā* said:

اِعْمَلُوْا

Do good deeds. He also instructed us to abstain from evils. This is why the Sufis embraced the Sharīʿat and were practical manifestations of it.

Sayyid Rifāʿī *rahimahullāh* says: Adhere to the injunctions of Islam, and Islam means following the Sharīʿat and turning away from the demands of one's self.

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful definition! The essence of this is that the person who follows the Sharīʿat and chooses to turn away from the demands of his self is in fact the one who is a Muslim, and this ought to be the mark of a Muslim.

I say, opening the door to the unseen is dependent on just one thing, viz. cleansing the heart of reprehensible characteristics. When a person cleanses his heart of all evil and his heart opens up, he gets the inspiration to carry out acts of obedience and to give up disobediences. After all, it is the reprehensible characteristics which do not allow him to move forward. The biggest obstacle to moving towards Allāh *taʿālā* is the carnal self. It is the same self which takes him towards sins and stops him from acts of obedience. All reprehensible characteristics are the attributes of the self. Thus, when a person is cleansed of reprehensible characteristics, the obstacle will be removed. This is because when blessings from Allāh *taʿālā* descend, they descend onto the heart first.

He says further on:

فاعلم الآن العبادة شطران شطر الاكتساب للطاعة وشطر الاجتناب للمعصية التي منها الأخلاق الذميمة، وأن شطر الاجتناب أفضل وأشرف للعبد من شطر الاكتساب، فإن ترك المضار مقدم على جلب المصالح.

Worship is divided into two: one entails acts of obedience and the other entails abstaining from sins. Reprehensible characteristics are from here as well. The part which comprises of abstention is the better and superior of the two because abstaining from harmful things is given preference over earning and acquiring beneficial things.

This is a most excellent statement made by the author of *Tarṣīʿ*. Abstaining from sins is undoubtedly superior to and more necessary than doing good deeds. This theme is supported by the Qur'ān. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

فَمَنْ زُحْزِحَ عَنِ النَّارِ وَأُدْخِلَ الْجَنَّةَ فَقَدْ فَازَ

Then whoever is drawn far away from the Hell-fire and entered into Paradise - he has succeeded.[1]

We learn from this that there is the Hell-fire on one side and Paradise on the other side. The one who commits sins goes to the Hell-fire while the one who does acts of obedience becomes eligible for Paradise. However, from these two, it is more important to save oneself from the Hell-fire. This is why it is mentioned first in the above verse. Even a single minute in the Hell-fire will be unbearable. All the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* sought refuge from the Hell-fire and from Allāh's punishment. The Auliyā' who came after them followed them in this regard as well.

A saint makes duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā* as follows:

> I am not saying You must accept my obedience, all I want is for You to cross the pen of pardon over my sins.

In other words, pardon me my sins and save me from the Hell-fire. This is enough for me. Whether I receive the different levels of Paradise or not, that is immaterial, but I certainly want salvation from the Hell-fire.

I have understood the conditions of today and am speaking to you accordingly. People think that we speak whatever our heart desires. Rather, we have observed the world and are still observing it. This is why we speak according to the conditions that are prevailing in our time.

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[1] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 185.

People of insight abstain from sins

The author of *Tars̲īʿ* says further on:

This is why you will see people of insight abstaining from sins and their full focus is on safeguarding their heart from inclining towards anyone apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. This is because if the heart becomes occupied in other things, so will the rest of the body parts. It is for this reason that they consider the worst sin to be the heart inclining to anything apart from Allāh *taʿālā*. They also focus on safeguarding their stomachs from unnecessary foods, their tongues from futile talks and their eyes from unlawful things. All this is the fruit of setting right the heart.

A H̲adīth states that when the heart is rectified, it develops the capability of accepting rectitude. When the heart starts accepting this, the rest of the body parts – which are subservient to the heart – also start accepting rectitude. Consequently, it becomes easy to carry out acts of obedience and to abstain from sins.

When I was in Mumbai, I quoted the following couplet of H̲ad̲rat H̲ājī Imdādullāh S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*:

> I was constantly making objections against others, but when my eyes opened, I found that my own heart was dense with defects.[1]

When the people in Mumbai heard it, they were overjoyed. One person said to me: "You diagnosed the illness of my entire life."

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[1] H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Ah̲mad S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh* explains this couplet through another couplet:

When our eyes opened, we fell in rank from our own eyes.

Some people think that such and such person – in fact, the whole world – is nothing while they are everything. I ask such people: “What prove do you have that you are perfect? Have you reached the level of perfection by looking down on Allāh’s servants?” Listen! This is not a thing of perfection; it is an ailment.

The man said that I diagnosed the illness of his entire life. This is what the poet is saying – that as long as his eyes remained shut, he was looking at the faults of others. But when his eyes opened, he found a large heap of his own faults. He realized that the most faults are found within himself.

When the people [of Mumbai] were impressed by the couplet which I quoted, I said to them the next day: “You heard a couplet yesterday, now let me quote another couplet on the same theme:

> As long as we did not know our own selves, we continued looking at the faults and excellences of others. But once our eyes fell on our sins, we saw no other bad person. (Bahādur Shāh Z̲afar)

In other words, as long as I hadn’t recognized my own self, I continued looking at the faults of others. But once my eyes opened and I realized my own self, I did not see anyone worse than me. Once I acquired this quality, I acquired total humility. It is by virtue of this humility that Allāh *taʿālā* pardons.

This couplet is one of absolute humility. The humility of Shāh Z̲afar *rah̲imahullāh* will – inshā Allāh – be a cause of additional value in the sight of Allāh *taʿālā*.

When I quoted this couplet, a person asked me: “How did you come to know of this couplet?” I replied: “Brother! We are living in this world just as you are.

We came across it by reading books, so what is so astonishing about it? Furthermore, this couplet is on the subject of rectification of the self, so we ought to know about. If we do not know such things, what will we teach you." He then said: "Very well, there is another couplet which is also filled with spirituality."

> No matter how intelligent and sharp-witted a person may be, Z̲afar will not consider him to be a human if he does not remember Allāh *taʿālā* in prosperity and fear Him in adversity.

The author of *Tars̲īʿ* says that excessive wealth results in transgression, while excessive actions results in conceit. In other words, when a person has a lot of wealth, his self does not remain within its boundaries. This is why we see the wealthy ones who used to oppose the Prophets and Messengers *ʿalayhimus salām*. On one side we have the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* who are the friends of Allāh *taʿālā* and on the other side are the wealthy ones who oppose them with their wealth. A person can only oppose another with what he has, so they oppose the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* with their wealth, but they are never successful in this opposition.

The story of Qārūn

Qārūn opposed H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* solely on the basis of his wealth. H̲ad̲rat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* began collecting zakāh from the Banī Isrāʾīl. Qārūn was from the Banī Isrāʾīl and possessed vast treasures of wealth – even more than Pharaoh. He thought to himself that if one fortieth of his wealth is taken out as zakāh, it will be a very large amount. Subsequently, he trained a certain woman to make some accusations

against Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* when he delivers a lecture.

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* was delivering a lecture and speaking about the ills of adultery. Qārūn indicated to the woman, so she stood up and asked: "Does the ruling against adultery which you are speaking about apply to us only or does it apply to everyone?"

Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* said that it applies to everyone. The woman then said what she was taught by Qārūn. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* became angry and asked her: "Are you saying this from your own self or were you taught by someone to say it?" The women became terrified and said that it was Qārūn who had taught her. Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* fell in prostration to Allāh *taʿālā*.

Allāh *taʿālā* said: "O Mūsā! Raise your head. The ground is at your beck and call. It will do as you order." Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* ordered the ground to seize Qārūn. When he was about to be swallowed by the ground, he said: "This is my relative. He is treating me in this way because he wants to seize all my wealth." When Hadrat Mūsā *ʿalayhis salām* heard this, he instructed the ground to swallow him together with his wealth. All his wealth was gathered and he was swallowed by the ground with his wealth.[1]

In the same way anyone who opposed a Prophet was never successful. These people want to compete against the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* through their wealth and physical strength. I see the same condition

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[1] قصص الأنبياء لابن كثير، ص ٣٩٧.

in people today. You have heard the story of Qārūn. The wealthy people in the time of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did the same to him.

Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was performing s̲alāh in the Kaʿbah on one occasion. When he went into prostration, some unbelievers brought the entrails of a camel and threw it on the back of Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*. The weight of it prevented him from getting up from prostration. When H̲ad̲rat Fāt̲imah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhā* was informed of it, she rushed to him and removed the entrails. The unbelievers were close by in Dār an-Nadwah. They were watching the scene and virtually falling over each other out of laughter. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* raised his hand, called each one by name and said: "May Allāh destroy such and such person." They were terrified when they heard this and were convinced about their own destruction because they knew that Rasūlullāh's prayers are answered. They were all destroyed in the Battle of Badr. The manner in which they were destroyed is well-known to you.

The above discussion was on the subject of transgression because of excessive wealth. The author of *Tars̲īʿ* said that excessive actions results in conceit. Transgression in actions is known as conceit. The special servants of Allāh *taʿālā* gain proximity to Him through good actions. The more the actions, the closer they get to Him. But there are some people who develop conceit on account of their actions. They are the ones whose *taufīq* (inspiration) is taken away by Allāh *taʿālā*. The actions which are normally the means for closeness to Allāh *taʿālā* become the causes of distance from Him. Conceit sometimes causes them to fall into sin so that they can come out of their conceit. This is why the Sufis say that the sin which

creates humility and submission is better than the obedience which causes pride and conceit. Although the sin is bad in itself, the condition of remorse and submission which follows it becomes a means of closeness to Allāh *taʿālā*, and He is pleased by it.

There was a person who used to experience many spiritual conditions by virtue of serving his shaykh. He relates his condition as follows: When I went to my hometown, I proceeded to the graveyard and addressed my family members out of pride: "I have brought the thing which had left this place." The moment I said this, all my spiritual conditions were taken away from me. I noticed that the basis on which I had been vexing pride was taken away, nothing remained. Previously when I used to read the Qur'ān, I myself and those who used to listen to me used to go into an ecstasy. Now my condition is that I myself do not like my own recitation, what, then can be said about those who listen to me!? How will they ever like it?

I am relating this incident to show you how lofty spiritual conditions are taken away because of conceit. It is not possible to safeguard one's self from it without inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* and His help. This is the most difficult terrain in this path. When a person starts treading this path, he receives certain spiritual conditions and he assumes that he is now perfect and that these conditions cannot leave him. It is from that very point that he is destroyed in this path. The moment he thinks in this way, inspiration from Allāh *taʿālā* is taken away from him. A person can only be saved if Allāh *taʿālā* protects him. This is why he has to turn to Allāh *taʿālā* constantly and beg Him for inspiration. Rasūlullāh *ṣallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā':

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ اَسْاَلُكَ التَّوْفِيْقَ لِمَحَآبِّكَ مِنَ الْاَعْمَالِ، وَصِدْقَ التَّوَكُّلِ عَلَيْكَ، وَحُسْنَ الظَّنِّ بِكَ.

O Allāh! I ask You for inspiration to do good actions which are liked by You, to have genuine trust in You, and to have good thoughts about You.

I delved on this topic because people have been conferred with spiritual conditions and suffered losses on account of them. It is necessary to know the causes so that a person can be safeguarded from them.

Sin in itself is bad, but the sin which causes submission is better than that act of obedience which results in pride and conceit. When submission develops in a heart, the person will repent and disobedience will no longer remain. But when obedience causes an evil quality, the obedience no longer remains an obedience.

These personalities treaded the path themselves and were fully aware of it. They recorded their conditions in books so that others can learn the path from them, tread it, and reach the destination.

THE NEED FOR UNDERSTANDING IN THIS PATH

This path requires understanding more than it does physical efforts and striving. There was a saint who cut his leg so the seniors said that this is an imposition on the self.

I say it was imposition on the body and not on the self because after cutting the leg, the self is still in existence. This act is an excess which is prohibited. Actions of this nature were common in nations of the past. The Sharīʿat of Muhammad *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* cancelled them. Listen! The Sharīʿat is best and easiest. Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* prohibited a woman from taking support from a rope and said that there is no need for such extremism. Engage in worship, and when you are overcome by sleep, you must go to sleep.

THE NEED TO LOOK AT ONE'S OWN FAULTS

Whenever a person starts Dīnī work in a place, the masses have objections to it. They start fomenting trouble and fabricate various lies against the person. The same treatment was meted out to the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*. These people do not have the ability to listen to the truth nor do they allow others to listen. Their full-time occupation is to cause trouble. This has become the religion of the masses and they are happy about it. When I look at these people, I see that they are neither good in Dīnī matters nor in worldly affairs, yet they think that they are doing very well. Nowadays there is no one to tell them that they are causing corruption. Corruption has become their mattress and their duvet. It has become a natural trait in them. Corruption has become their special skill. We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā*.

There was a person who was opposed to me and caused many problems but he could not succeed. Instead, he was disgraced in a terrible way. When anyone advised him, he would say: "Why are you advising me? I have already become a devil. And not only me, anyone who leaves that place will be in the same condition."

There was another person who used to talk bad about me every day in front of a person who was associated with me. The latter listened patiently to whatever he had to say for a few days and eventually asked: "Did you ever go there?" He replied in the negative. He asked: "If you never went there and never observed what is happening there, why are you saying such things? You should at least go once and observe the situation there." My associate then brought him one day. He then asked him: "Now tell me, what are your

impressions?" He replied: "I knew from before hand that this is a very good place. I used to say those things merely to irk you."

Did you see how crooked a person he was! He was compelled into saying such things by his temperament. A poet says:

> When a scorpion bites, it is not out of malice. Rather, it is due to the demand of its temperament.

This is the condition of people. Neither is their Dīn in them nor do they have any intelligence. The intellect was created so that man could differentiate between good and bad. But when he goes astray, his intelligence also goes astray and it cannot do the correct thing.

These corrupt people slander the religious people. They know fully well that they are not doing any good and that it is against integrity. But what else can they do? They do not have knowledge with which they could speak on academic issues, nor do they have intelligence with which they could speak on rational issues. The only thing they can do is to express what remains in them [corruption]. As the saying goes:

كل إناء يترشح بما فيه

Each utensil will give off only that which is in it.

When an ʿālim speaks, he will speak on issues related to knowledge. As for an ignorant person whose self has become corrupt, he can only swear someone, slander another, and so on. What else can the poor fellow do!

These people do not suffice with committing sins on their own. Instead, they direct their attention to

religious people and try to harm them. No sooner a servant of Allāh *taʿālā* starts some work of Dīn, they will focus on him and try to harm him in every possible way. Allāh *taʿālā* says with reference to such people:

وَكَذٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيٰطِيْنَ الْإِنْسِ وَالْجِنِّ

In this way We made for every Prophet enemies, mischievous humans and jinn.[1]

If these people were confined to committing sins themselves, there was a possibility of getting the inspiration to repent and having their sins pardoned. However, Shayṯān led them so astray that worse than their evil deeds, he got them occupied in trying to harm religious people and they became focussed on harming Muslims. This entails trampling on the rights of fellow humans which cannot be pardoned by mere repentance. They will have to obtain the pardon of those whom they wronged.

Read the Qur'ān and see how severely Allāh *taʿālā* prohibits corruption and fomenting of trouble. See how displeased He is with those who cause corruption.

فَاِنَّ اللّٰهَ عَلِيْمٌۢ بِالْمُفْسِدِيْنَ

Allāh is fully aware of those who cause corruption.[2]

These people will only desist when Allāh *taʿālā* treats them according to His knowledge. Consequently, we seem being destroyed from all sides. This is the

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[1] Sūrah al-Anʿām, 6: 112.

[2] Sūrah Āl ʿImrān, 3: 63.

consequence of their corruption and their causing pain to the hearts of righteous people. Destruction has encompassed them from all sides. A poet says:

> Allāh *taʿālā* did not humiliate a nation for as long it did not cause pain to the heart of a man of Allāh.

The thing which is disliked most by Allāh *taʿālā* is to oppress and wrong someone. He says:

وَمَا اَنَا بِظَلَّامٍ لِّلْعَبِيْدِ

I do not commit the slightest wrong against My servants.[1]

This, not withstanding the fact that even if Allāh *taʿālā* did wrong His servants, it will not be considered to be a wrong in reality. It will be a wrong in appearance only. The reason for saying this is that oppression or wrong is defined as follows:

وضع الشيء في غير محله

Placing a thing in the wrong place.

When a person exercises his influence on something which belongs to him, it is considered to be done in the rightful and correct manner and place. Man belongs to Allāh *taʿālā*. Despite this, Allāh *taʿālā* abhors even the outward appearance of oppression. Thus, when people commit wrongs against each other – and that too, wrongs which are genuine wrongs and not in appearance – then how much more they will be disliked by Allāh *taʿālā*!

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[1] Sūrah Qāf, verse 29.

The hearts of these people are sick and so are their selves. It is a very dangerous condition. But they are not aware of their sickness. They will sit in restaurants, drink tea and while away their time in speaking about things which do not concern them. Speaking about the evils of religious people and fabricating lies against them has become their main occupation. I say, very well, you can do as you like in this world. When you go to the next world and you find your book of deeds completely black, you will regret and rue, but it will be of no avail to you.

The best treatment for troublemakers

Understand well whatever I am saying to you. The only treatment for such people is that just as troublemaking and corruption are in their nature, discarding and distancing yourself from trouble and corruption must become your nature. There can be no better and stronger evidence than this. The more corruption and impiety you see in them, the more piety and abstaining from troublemaking must be found in you to the extent that you overwhelm and overpower them. Corruption cannot be combated by anything other than abstaining from corruption.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an excellent treatment shown to us by Hadrat Muslihul Ummat *rahimahullāh*. May Allāh *taʿālā* reward him. (compiler)

The good end is for the righteous

I believe that this is the best treatment for every type of corruption. That is, you yourself abstain from corruption. If you desire a good end, practise strictly on the Sharīʿat and give up following the demands of the carnal self. If you do this, you will see its benefits. The benefits will not be confined to you alone. Rather, they will be enjoyed by others as well. Thus, carry on

with your work and do not get embroiled with others. Success is always for the truthful ones – even if it is late in coming. The Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* also had to bear hardships and challenges in the beginning. But the final end was in their favour. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِيْنَ

The good end is for the righteous.

People over here address me as Pīr S̲āh̲ib. I said to them that this causes me much discomfort. When they address me as Maulwī S̲āh̲ib I am not so discomforted. But when they call me Pīr S̲āh̲ib, I feel as though an arrow has struck me. What is the reason for this?

Someone said to me: “You probably think of something when someone addresses you like that.” I replied: “Yes, you are right.” The actual meaning of Pīr is “an expert guide”, “a qualified mentor”. But this meaning is not applied nowadays. In other words, people do not take it to mean “a qualified mentor” but take the opposite meaning. When they address me in this way, I feel they are probably thinking me to be that. This is why it causes me discomfort.

Listen! In the beginning, I had to face opposition wherever I went. Subsequently, people began saying: “He quotes the Qur’ān and H̲adīth to us. He relates the stories of the pious predecessors to us. Why should we object to him?” I do not know why people become scared of places like this. I think Shayt̲ān deceives them.

When I was in my hometown, a person from a certain place used to come to me. He used to say: “I conceal myself from the gazes of people and come to you. When they see me, they point fingers at me.” In other words, they consider my place to be an evil place, and make objections to the person for coming to me. Later on, the situation changed and when they see anyone coming to me, they look up to him with high regard and say: “He goes there.” In other words, they look up to the person and also to my place.

If a person disregards what people have to say and continues with his work, Shayṯān loses hope. When the reality is exposed, they give up their opposition.

Bahjah an-Nufūs is a commentary of *Bukhārī Sharīf*. It relates the story of a person who went to a saint to traverse the path of Sufism. The saint instructed him to go into solitude for a few days and to remain there. The saint then went to him and asked: "Tell me, how do you view me?" The man replied: "Like a pig." The saint said: "You are right." The saint left the man in solitude. (If it was in our times, the saint will get offended and expel the person from the khānqāh. But that saint knew the reason for saying this. This is why he left the man to strive further). He went back after a few days and asked the man: "How do you view me now?" The man said: "Like a dog." The saint asked him to remain in solitude in the room. He went to him again after a few days and posed the same question. The man said something else. The saint continued in this manner, and on each occasion the man would give a different reply. Eventually he said: "You appear like a 14th moon." The saint said: "You are right. I was like this from the very first day. All these changes were taking place within you. You were seeing me as you yourself were. Now that you yourself have become a full moon, you are seeing me like that as well. You different answers were reflections of your changing conditions. You have reached the level of perfection. Congratulations to you. You may now leave."

I related this incident to show you that no matter how perfect a person may be, if you want to be able to recognize him correctly you will have to have a pure heart. If a heart is devoid of respect for someone, he will see nothing but faults in him.

The wife of a saint had no faith in his saintliness. He began flying one day and flew over his house. All the people saw him flying and his wife also saw it [but did not know it was her husband]. When he came to his house, his wife said to him: “You are making baseless claims to saintliness. Today I saw a real saint who was flying in the air.” He asked: “Was he really a saint?” She replied: “Can there any doubt in it?” When he obtained her affirmation and confirmation, he said: “That was actually me.” When she heard this she said: “Oh it was you! That’s why you were flying crookedly!”

Did you see! One is to fly straight and the other is to fly crooked. The one who had faith in him saw his flying to be straight while the one who had no faith in him saw his flying to be crooked.

When you experience such things in your heart, you must realize that the shaykh is a mirror who is showing you your actual condition. In other words, you are seeing yourself in his mirror. When you experience doubts, objections and whisperings; you must conclude that it is your own condition and not of the shaykh. A person used to say to me: “When I attend your assembly, I see all my sins before me from beginning to end.” I replied: “You are right. The shaykh is a mirror.”

An incident related to rectification

There was a shaykh in whose service people used to remain. A man came and stayed over for one week. The shaykh conferred him with khilāfat within one week and bid him farewell. Those who had been in the company of the shaykh thought to themselves: “We have been here for so long but we did not receive anything, while this man came here, received khilāfat within one week and departed.” The shaykh came to

know of what was running through the peoples' minds, so he wanted to give them a rational answer. He asked them to go into the forest and bring fresh moist twigs. They all presented them before the shaykh. He asked them to burn the twigs. They tried their utmost but could not get the twigs to burn. He eventually asked them: "What is the matter?" They replied: "Hadrat, the twigs are fresh and moist, this is why the fire is not catching on them." They must have assumed that the shaykh does not know of such things. He asked: "O I see, so fire does not catch on fresh and moist twigs?" They replied: "Certainly not." He said: "The man to whom I conferred khilāfat was like a dry twig. All he needed was to be ignited. As for you, you are moist twigs. I have been blowing on the fire to ignite you for so long that I now have a headache. And you are just as you were when you came here." They were most remorseful and abandoned their bad thoughts about the shaykh.

Did you see! This is what also takes place here. The moist twigs are first dried. Only then can they be ignited.

The statement of a shaykh is one just as the lesson of a teacher is one. The lecture of a lecturer is one. Despite this, some people benefit while others do not. In the same way, the one who continues absorbing the teachings of the mashā'ikh will one day reach the level of perfection. As for the other person, he will remain where he was. A person benefits according to his capability. If a person's capabilities are perfect, he will derive full benefit. If a person's capabilities are defective, the benefit which he derives will be defective. And if he has no capabilities, he will not benefit in the least. The blessings of the saints are like the sun. In fact, the blessings of the sun are within

one's choice while the blessings of the saints are not within one's choice. Their blessings therefore surpass those of the sun.

A prescription for entry into Paradise

Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a distinguished Jewish scholar. He was walking by when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was delivering a sermon from his pulpit. He was saying:

أيها الناس، أطعموا الطعام، وصلوا الأرحام، وأفشوا السلام، وصلُّوا والناس نيام، تدخلوا الجنة بسلام.[1]

O people! Give food to people, maintain ties of kinship, make the salām common, and perform salāh while people are asleep – you will enter Paradise peacefully.

The moment Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām heard these words, he stood still and thought to himself: This is undoubtedly a Messenger of Allāh, and his speech is the speech of a Prophet because it teaches noble characteristics, and none but a Prophet can teach such things.

He came to this conclusion by just this one teaching. A person can be recognized from his teachings. Īmān entered the heart of Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. He came to Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and said that he wants to become a Muslim.

He then said: "O Rasūlullāh! The people of the Book know you fully well and recognize you [as Allāh's Prophet] but they are not embracing īmān because of

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٣٩، ص ٢٠١.

the depravity of their selves. Let me demonstrate their wickedness to you. I will conceal myself and you must call a group of Jews. You must then ask them what they think of me.”

He concealed himself, a group of Jews arrived and Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked them: “Tell me, what do you think of ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām?” They replied: “He is the best one from among us. He is an excellent person, and so is his father and grandfather.” Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* asked: “What will you do if he becomes a Muslim?” They replied: “It is impossible for him to become a Muslim.” The moment he heard this, Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām emerged from his hiding place and said:

أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَّا اِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا رَّسُوْلُ اللهِ

I testify that there is none worthy of worship except Allāh and I testify that Muhammad is Allāh’s Messenger.

When they heard him uttering these words, they said: “He is the worst among us. His father is just like him and so is his grandfather.”[1]

Did you see how they made two contradictory statements in one assembly! As long as he was according to their wishes, he was a good man. No sooner he did something against their wishes, he became a terrible man.

I was saying to you that Hadrat ʿAbdullāh ibn Salām *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was a scholar and he knew what entailed noble character. This is why he was greatly affected by the statement of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu*

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[1] *Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalā’*, vol. 2, p. 415.

ʿalayhi wa sallam. There is no doubt whatsoever that just this one statement encompasses all noble characteristics. Feeding people is also from among the excellent characteristics and noble actions. The same can be said about offering salām because it demonstrates consideration and regard for others. These characteristics are part of the rights of fellow humans. On the other hand, performing salāh at night while people are asleep is a right of Allāh *taʿālā*. The essence of this Hadīth is that the person who fulfils the rights of fellow humans and the rights of Allāh *taʿālā* will enter Paradise.

Ponder over this: Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said: "make the salām common". The Arabic word *ifshā'* is used. This word is used when something has to become very common among everyone. We learn from this that we must offer salām to everyone – those whom we know and those whom we do not know. In fact, the salām of Islam is really the one which is offered to a person whom you do not know because then the catalyst for offering it is Islam. On the other hand, the reason for offering salām to someone you know could well be the fact that you know him and not on the basis of Islam itself.

A Hadīth states that the person who initiates the salām has removed himself from pride.[1] One person used to say: "I don't offer salām to such and such person because he waits for my salām." I replied: "Yes, many people consider the salām to be a tribal right. Are you going to do the same?" It is a practice in our area to invite to a meal only that person who has invited you for a meal to his house. If he does not

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[1] شعب الإيمان للبيهقي، ج ٦، ص ٤٣٣، حديث ٨٧٨٦.

invite you, then you too do not invite him. They apply the same rule to salām – they offer it to those whom they know and abstain from offering it to those whom they do not know. Or, they will offer it to the one with whom they are friendly and abstain from offering it to those with whom they are displeased. Whereas the Hadīth uses the word *ifshā'* which is all-encompassing.

One person said to me: "Look at those two, they are not on speaking terms for quite some time." I said: "This is not permissible." They were educated people but had succumbed to their egos and were discarding a Sunnat. Egotism has reached such a level that you will see people on a hajj journey, yet they are fighting with each other. Whereas Allāh *ta'ālā* says:

وَلَا جِدَالَ فِي الْحَجِّ

There is to be no quarrelling in hajj.[1]

People have really reached the limits – you will see them pushing and shoving each other in the Haram Sharīf. I would look at them and think to myself: "O Allāh! These people have come for hajj, yet they are behaving in this manner!?" I decided there and then that if I happen to come again, I must take such companions who are considerate and who have rectified their selves. Never travel with uncouth and bad-mannered people.

The benefit of salām

These Sunnats which you consider to be insignificant are means to rectifying many ills. Also on the subject of salām, a Hadīth states that the person on a

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[1] Sūrah al-Baqarah, 2: 197.

conveyance must offer salām to the one who is on foot, the one who is on foot must offer salām to the one who is sitting, a small group must offer salām to a large group. The ʿulamā' say that the reason for this is to create mutual love and put an end to discord. The condition of a person on a conveyance is better than the one who is on foot. If he offers salām first, it will be proof of his humility because although he was in a superior condition, he offered salām to one who was lower than him. This will increase the bond of love between the two and the objective of salām will be realized in a most beautiful manner.

Thus we see that as regards salām alone there are so many rules. When we study them we conclude that they are most certainly divine principles. Just this one Sunnat combines many Dīnī and worldly benefits. There was a person who used to say that when a person offers salām, one can gauge from it that he is saying it with his heart. This results in drawing the heart of the other. He used to say that after studying the manner of salām, he gauged that it is indeed a Sunnat of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam*.

The commissioning of Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* was for the perfection of noble character, and salām is part of it. When you find that you have to strive too much, then it is because you have abandoned the Sunnat. If you adopt the Sunnat, your striving will get less and you will reach your objective [Allāh *taʿālā*] easily.

Note: Glory to Allāh! What an easy way to reach Allāh *taʿālā*! (Muhammad Qamar az-Zamān)

A person went to a certain place and performed lengthy salāhs and ate very little food so that his host will be impressed by him and become his follower. When he returned to his house, he asked for food. His

son asked him: "You just returned from an invitation. Did you not eat there?" He replied: "Son, I did eat but I ate very little so that it comes to my aid (i.e. the rich person becomes impressed by me and thinks that I am a great saint because I eat very little)." His son said: "Father, then you will have to make up for your salāh as well so that it comes to your aid (in other words, the lengthy salāhs which you performed there were also for show. Repeat them so that they come to your aid in the Hereafter)."

Did you see! The world had become so beloved to him and he was so concerned about what people thought about him that he did something which was totally opposed to the Sharīʿat. The Islamic teaching is that if a guest eats a few extra morsels of food to make his host happy, then there is no harm in it. But for a person to eat less so that his guest is impressed by him! We seek refuge in Allāh *taʿālā* from such actions. It is most detestable to do such a thing and it is also against the teachings of the Tarīqat. There is no problem if I come to your house and eat. It is not harām for me to eat extra at sehrī time in order to get strength for fasting. But to eat less to impress others is nothing but ostentation and materialism. Outwardly the person is abstaining from food but internally he is seeking more.

There was a Maulwī Sāhib who used to say to his students: "Come, let's do the work of Paradise." He used to say this to them when it was time to have a meal after their lessons. The students would say: "Hadrat! How can eating be a work of Paradise!?" He would reply: "What else is there to do in Paradise apart from eating and drinking?" Allāh *taʿālā* says:

كُلُوْا وَاشْرَبُوْا هَنِيْئًا بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُوْنَ

Eat and drink with relish in return for what you had done.[1]

I say, just as Allāh *taʿālā* says that the people of Paradise will get every type of food and drink, He says that the inmates of Hell will also get to eat and drink, but it will be of a different kind. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

قُلْ إِنَّ الْأَوَّلِيْنَ وَالْآخِرِيْنَ. لَمَجْمُوْعُوْنَ ۙ إِلٰى مِيْقَاتِ يَوْمٍ مَّعْلُوْمٍ. ثُمَّ إِنَّكُمْ أَيُّهَا الضَّآلُّوْنَ الْمُكَذِّبُوْنَ. لَآكِلُوْنَ مِنْ شَجَرٍ مِّنْ زَقُّوْمٍ. فَمَالِئُوْنَ مِنْهَا الْبُطُوْنَ. فَشٰرِبُوْنَ عَلَيْهِ مِنَ الْحَمِيْمِ. فَشٰرِبُوْنَ شُرْبَ الْهِيْمِ. هٰذَا نُزُلُهُمْ يَوْمَ الدِّيْنِ.

Say: The past generations and the latter generations, all are to be gathered at the time of an appointed day. Then, O you who have gone astray, who are the rejecters, you shall certainly eat of the zaqqūm tree. You will fill your bellies with it. You will then drink boiling water over it. You will drink just as thirsty camels drink. This is their entertainment on the day of Judgement.[2]

We learn from this that the inmates of Hell will also feel hungry and thirsty, but they will get zaqqūm to eat and boiling water to drink

The actual act of eating and drinking is done both in this world and in Paradise, but the foods and drinks of Paradise are not available to us in this world. The students were very happy with the Maulwī Sāhib's point. I say that the real work of Paradise which we have to do in this world is īmān and good actions.

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[1] Sūrah al-Mursalāt, 77: 43.

[2] Sūrah al-Wāqiʿah, 56: 49-56.

Affirming Paradise entails affirming the bounties of Paradise, and that is by īmān and good actions.

Rasūlullāh s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam and then all the seniors – in emulation of him – made duʿā' to Allāh taʿālā in this world to bless them with Paradise.

اَللّٰهُمَّ اِنِّيْ أَسْئَلُكَ الْجَنَّةَ وَمَا قَرَّبَ إِلَيْهَا مِنْ قَوْلٍ أَوْ عَمَلٍ[1]

O Allāh! I beg You for Paradise and whatever word or action which will take me closer to it.

There is no similarity between the food of this world and the food of Paradise. When a person eats the food of this world, he has to relieve himself, whereas when he will eat the food of Paradise, he will merely burp. The thing which is specifically for this world is īmān and good deeds. Included in this is the above-quoted duʿā'. This duʿā' must not be made just once and then abandoned. Instead, it must be made regularly.

The S̲ah̲ābah *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhum* were most desirous of Paradise. Sometimes they would be eating something and then leave it aside, and say: "We are getting the fragrance of Paradise." Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* said on one occasion: "If you want to see a person of Paradise in this world then look at Abū Bakr."

An important action which we have left out in this world is asking for Paradise. The Ahlullāh asked Allāh *taʿālā* for Paradise in various ways. Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* used to make the following duʿā':

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[1] مسند أحمد بن حنبل، ج ٤١، ص ٤٨٤.

اَللّٰهُمَّ ارْزُقْنِيْ عَيْنَيْنِ هَطَّالَتَيْنِ تَسْقِيَانِ الْقَلْبَ بِذُرُوْفِ الدَّمْعِ مِنْ خَشْيَتِكَ قَبْلَ اَنْ تَكُوْنَ الدُّمُوْعُ دَمًا وَّالْاَضْرَاسُ جَمْرًا

O Allāh! Endow me with eyes which tear profusely and thereby drench the heart with flowing tears out of Your fear; before the arrival of the time when tears turn into blood and jaws turn into embers.

اَللّٰهُمَّ عَافِنِيْ فِيْ قُدْرَتِكَ، وَاَدْخِلْنِيْ فِيْ رَحْمَتِكَ، وَاقْضِ اَجَلِيْ فِيْ طَاعَتِكَ، وَاخْتِمْ لِيْ بِخَيْرِ عَمَلِيْ، وَاجْعَلْ ثَوَابَهُ الْجَنَّةَ.[1]

O Allāh! Grant me peace in Your power, admit me into Your mercy, let my life-span pass in Your obedience, let my end be with the best of my deeds, and make Paradise the reward of this.

Allāh *taʿālā* says in praise of His righteous servants:

وَالَّذِيْنَ يَقُوْلُوْنَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ ﺻﻠﮯ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا

Who say: O our Lord! Avert from us the punishment of Hell. Surely its punishment is inseparable.[2]

إِنَّهَا سَآءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَّمُقَامًا

It is an evil resting place and an evil dwelling place.[3]

When Allāh *taʿālā* refers to a place as being evil, we cannot even imagine how evil it must be.

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[1] فيض القدير، ج ٢، ص ١٤٣.

[2] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 65.

[3] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 66.

The Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* had as much fear of Hell as they had the yearning for Paradise. When they used to think of Hell and its punishments, the effects of fear used to be seen on their faces. Today we neither have a desire for Paradise nor any fear of Hell. Consequently, a person said that if the Sahābah *radiyallāhu ʿanhum* had to come in our times and observe us, they would refer to us as unbelievers and say that these people have no fear whatsoever of Hell. On the other hand, we will consider them to be mad [because of their intense fear].

Allāh *taʿālā* says further on:

وَالَّذِيْنَ إِذَآ أَنْفَقُوْا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوْا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوْا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذٰلِكَ قَوَامًا

[The servants of the Merciful are they] who, when they spend, are neither extravagant nor niggardly; but are on a middle way between the two [extremes].[1]

Bearing in mind that spending in Allāh's cause is one of the ways in which a person can save himself from the Hell-fire, Allāh *taʿālā* spoke about how one's wealth should be spent. There is great virtue in spending Allāh's path. Whatever a person spends for Allāh's sake will never go to waste. The smallest good action and the weakest bond with Allāh *taʿālā* are not devoid of benefit.

It is recorded that a person who used to frequent a certain shaykh passed away. The shaykh made duʿā' to Allāh *taʿālā*: "O Allāh! He used to come frequently to me. Admit him into Paradise and give him salvation from Hell. He was my friend. If I were to go to Paradise

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[1] Sūrah al-Furqān, 25: 67.

and he goes to Hell, what would the benefit of his bond with me be?”

Listen! I am relating these stories to you and will continue relating them so that you will change yourselves and we too will change ourselves. My purpose in saying this is that there is no benefit in futile and useless talks. Talks must be useful and must be about sincerity, following the Sunnat, īmān and good actions.

Only when a person severs his relationships from outward and superficial beloveds will he truly understand the mysteries of Allāh-recognition.

Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

EMULATING MAKES ACTIONS EASY

As long as a person doesn't have a quest and an aspiration, he finds it difficult to emulate and follow someone. No sooner he develops a quest, he takes comfort from the fact that it is not difficult at all to follow in the footsteps of another. Allāh *taʿālā* says:

وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيْلَ مَنْ اَنَابَ اِلَيَّ

Follow the way of the one who has turned to Me.[1]

The order to follow someone is not laid down to make things difficult for a person. Rather, it is to make it easy for him. Subsequently, whatever a person is ordered to do becomes easy for him. People reached great ranks by virtue of following. The more a person followed another, the greater the rank he achieved. The high ranks in Dīn enjoyed by H̲ad̲rat Abū Bakr *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* and H̲ad̲rat ʿUmar *rad̲iyallāhu ʿanhu* were solely due to their following Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam.*

I am astonished at those who make objections against following. If you are not going to follow the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām*, you will have to follow the village chiefs. When the unbelievers of Makkah refused to follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* they were forced to follow Abū Jahal. The difference is that if you follow Rasūlullāh *s̲allallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* you will be successful. If you refuse to follow him and follow deviated people, you will go to Hell.

It is most paradoxical that the deviated ones stopped the people from following the Prophets *ʿalayhimus*

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[1] Sūrah Luqmān, 31: 15.

salām but imposed them to follow themselves. These chiefs were never desirous of the wellbeing of their people, they were more concerned about their own benefits. Those who did not follow the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* did not refuse because they had no proof for following them. In fact, they themselves had the proof for it because they were imposing the masses to follow them. If following someone was an evil, then no one at all should be followed. Where, then, is the sense in stopping the masses from following pious, righteous and affectionate people like the Prophets *ʿalayhimus salām* and imposing on them to follow their own selves? So it is not because following is an evil. Their reason for not following is explained in the Qur'ān. They will say on the day of Resurrection:

غَلَبَتْ عَلَيْنَا شِقْوَتُنَا وَكُنَّا قَوْمًا ضَآلِّيْنَ

Our wretchedness overwhelmed us and we remained a deviated people.[1]

To follow and emulate is a most excellent thing. Perfection in Dīn and worldly matters can only be realized through following another. Any type of work in this world – no matter how small it may seem – cannot be done without first following someone. Even cutting a length of material which is to be sewn into a garment cannot be done without learning from someone. In fact, cutting it is more difficult than sewing and stitching it. We see that everything in this world is achieved by following someone. Why should it be any different in Dīnī matters? H̲ad̲rat Maulānā Muh̲ammad Qāsim S̲āh̲ib *rah̲imahullāh*, the founder

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[1] Sūrah al-Mu'minūn, 23: 106.

of Dār al-ʿUlūm Deoband used to say: "I really enjoy eating a meal to which I am invited and to be a muqtadī in salāh." The reason why he liked this is that the burden is placed on the shoulders of others. This demonstrates Hadrat's deep insight. Another proof that following someone makes things easy can be understood from the following story which I will relate to you.

A wedding party was going for a wedding. The bride's family laid down two conditions on the groom's family: (1) Each person will have to eat one goat. (2) The groom's family must not bring any old person. Before departing they consulted an old family member who said: "Accept the two conditions but conceal me among the luggage. We will see what happens."

When they reached, the bride's family counted each person and presented the same number of goats to them, and said to them that they will have to eat those goats. They consulted the old man. He said: "First slaughter one goat, and everyone must get together and eat it." They were a large number. Each person received one or two pieces and the goat was eaten up without anyone realizing it. The second goat was slaughtered and distributed in the same way and they ate it. The third, fourth, etc. were consumed one after the other until they finished all the goats which were given to them. They then asked for more. The people were astonished and said: "There is certainly an old man with you." On hearing this, the old man said: "I came here for this very moment."

Look at how they followed an old experienced man and a complex situation was solved.

There was an ʿālim in Deoband who wrote an article whose tone was a bit harsh. It caused an uproar in the country. When Hadrat Maulānā Ashraf ʿAlī Thānwī

rahimahullāh heard of it, he said: “He is a young man that is why he wrote in such a harsh tone. If an old man wrote it, he would not have adopted such a tone. He would have been moderate and balanced. The knowledge of an old ʿālim is solid and he also has considerable experience. Consequently, a person is able to remain on the correct path.”

The work got spoilt ever since people gave up following the elders of Dīn. If not, there is no easier and simpler work. There is neither humiliation nor degradation in it. Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* followed Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and he received khilāfat. He also led the people in salāh when Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* had fallen ill. It is stated in a Hadīth that when Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* was asked to lead the people in salāh, Hadrat ʿĀ’ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* felt that if this was Rasūlullāh’s final illness and he passed away after it, people will take a bad omen and say that because Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* became the imām, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* could not recover. In order to prevent this accusation, Hadrat ʿĀ’ishah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* said to Hadrat Hafsah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* that Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is weak-hearted and will not be able to bear the responsibility of standing in Rasūlullāh’s place. Hadrat Hafsah *radiyallāhu ʿanhā* should therefore ask her father, Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, to lead the people in salāh. The latter got ready for this responsibility. When Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* came to know that Hadrat ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* is going to lead the salāh and not Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*, he announced from his room: “Allāh *taʿālā*, His Messenger and the believers do not approve of the imāmat of anyone apart from Abū Bakr.” When he heard this, Hadrat

ʿUmar *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* stepped back and Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu* led the congregation in salāh.[1]

Now look at this virtue and rank of Hadrat Abū Bakr *radiyallāhu ʿanhu*. Allāh *taʿālā*, Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* and the believers were not happy with the imāmat of anyone else. The reason for this is that he followed and emulated Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* the most. This is how he got the title of Siddīq. Abū Jahal did not follow Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* so he was addressed as Abū Jahal, was killed in a battle, and succumbed to absolute disgrace.

A major blessing of following another is that the follower is eventually accorded the place of the one whom he followed. It is recorded that kings used to have slaves who used to attend to them to the extent of cleaning up their excreta. When the kings had to go on a journey, they would seat the same slaves in their place and appoint them as their deputies. Europeans generally object to slavery but there were certain kings who accorded greater ranks to their slaves that they did to their own sons. This is a distinguishing feature of Islam.

Some ʿulamā' say that the ʿulamā' did not follow their seniors because of the conceit of their selves. I also say this. Hadrat Maulānā *rahimahullāh* delivered a lecture in Jaunpūr on one occasion. He said: "I ask the ʿulamā', do they not feel it below them to go to the mashā'ikh? If they do not, there is no need for them to go to the mashā'ikh because their rectification has

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[1] There are different narrations on this subject. Refer to *Subul al-Hudā wa ar-Rashād*, vol. 12 for details.

been completed. But if they consider it below their dignity, then in the presence of such an evil their rectification has certainly not been completed."

On hearing this, Maulānā Abū Bakr Sāhib who was present remarked: "Well said, Maulānā! You hit the nail on the head." He also said: "Rasūlullāh *sallallāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam* did not follow his self. Rather, he followed Allāh *taʿālā*. Why, then, do the 'ulamā' follow their selves?" He added: "Following a deputy of the Messenger actually entails following the Messenger himself."

I was saying to you that following is a very easy, simple and enjoyable thing. The carnal self enjoys being in control. In the same way, when a person carries out obligations – which requires obliterating his own will – he experiences a special joy in this obliteration which greatly surpasses the joy of the self-control and freedom of the self. The reason is that the enjoyment of the self is a carnal enjoyment while the other is a spiritual enjoyment. Similarly, a seeker and a lover gets enjoyment from following his beloved. As for those who consider following to be difficult, it is because of their own depravation. Following in itself is certainly not an evil – whether in worldly matters or Dīnī matters. After all, there is nothing easier than following in the footsteps of another. You will become successful.

This is what Hadrat Maulānā Muhammad Qāsim Sāhib Nānautwī *rahimahullāh* meant when he used to say: "I thoroughly enjoy performing salāh in congregation as a muqtadī (follower). All you have to do is make your intention of following the imām and continue following him. You do not have to do anything. The entire responsibility rests with the

imām. Once a muqtadī enters the imām’s rule, he frees himself.”

Glory to Allāh! What a beautiful explanation. This demonstrates the wisdom and acumen of our seniors.

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We now conclude this volume. We tried to simplify and explain wherever we could. Inshā Allāh, the next volume will also contain most important themes. May Allāh *taʿālā* bless me with good health and strength. May He confer me with the perception to be able to render this important service of simplifying and collating these themes. Inspiration is from Allāh *taʿālā* alone.

Mu<u>h</u>ammad Qamar az-Zamān Allāhābādī
28 Mu<u>h</u>arram al-<u>H</u>arām 1434 A.H.
Madrasah ʿArabīyyah, Bayt al-Maʿārif, Allāhābād

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

All praise is due to Allāh *taʿālā* translation of this book was completed on 10 Ramadān 1439 A.H./26 May 2018. We pray to Allāh *taʿālā* to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of our salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ السَّمِيْعُ الْعَلِيْمُ، وَتُبْ عَلَيْنَا اِنَّكَ اَنْتَ التَّوَّابُ الرَّحِيْمُ

As with all human endeavours, there are bound to be errors, mistakes and slip-ups in the translation. I humbly request the reader to inform me of them so that these could be corrected in future editions. Constructive criticism and suggestions will be highly appreciated. I can be contacted via e-mail: maulanamahomedy@gmail.com

Was salām
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